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Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

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Seventy-second year

Identical letters dated 6 March 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour herewith to transmit a letter with regard to aggressive joint military exercises staged by the United States and south Korea against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) from the date of 1 March 2017, in disregard of repeated warnings by the Government of DPRK and strong protests and condemnations from internal and external communities.

These joint military exercises being staged by the United States in south Korea are the most undisguised nuclear war manoeuvres, to drive the Korean Peninsula and the rest of the North-East Asia region into nuclear disaster.

This is to mention that all different kinds of strategic assets of the United States, not only nuclear propelled aircraft carriers but also nuclear submarines, nuclear strategic bombers and stealth fighters, are all massively enlisted in these joint military exercises, Key Resolve and Foal Eagle, to wage actual war drills in accordance with a nuclear pre-emptive plan to attack DPRK by surprise.

Nobody could vouch whether, when the war drills kicked off after the introduction of a lot of nuclear strike means and huge forces into south Korea and the waters, it may go over to an actual war and, consequently, the situation on the Korean Peninsula is again inching to the brink of a nuclear war.

The United States seeks to convince public opinion that the joint military exercises Key Resolve and Foal Eagle are ascribable to DPRK access to nuclear weapons; however, this is nothing but sophism, making a profound confusion of right and wrong in the case.

Such aggressive joint military exercises and nuclear threats against DPRK were perpetrated or numerous occasions by the United States well before the period of our possession of a nuclear deterrent.

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The extreme anti-DPRK hostile policy, nuclear threats and blackmail, as well as manoeuvres to enforce its nuclear weapons, including the joint military exercises committed by the United States, are only the main reason and primary factor for DPRK to equip with nuclear attack self-defensive capabilities and strengthen its nuclear deterrent forces to a high level.

Therefore, I request that the issue of the U.S.-south Korea joint military exercises be placed on the Security Council agenda and discussed at a meeting of the Security Council with no further delay.

This is to reaffirm our position once again that the Security Council, strictly adhering to its missions and mandate, should accept our request to ensure peace and security over the Korean Peninsula and thus solve the root cause of tension of the situation over the Korean Peninsula and contribute to international peace and security in a practical way.

Should the Security Council ignore again the justified requests by DPRK to discuss the issue of U.S.-south Korea joint military exercises at the Security Council, then it would only reveal the real face of the Security Council, which only plays the role of the political tool of certain individual powers, giving up all its primary missions and the trust of international communities.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its two annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **Ja** Song Nam
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex I to the identical letters dated 6 March 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Statement by a spokesperson for the General Staff of the Korean People's Army on 2 March 2017 with regard to joint military exercises staged by the United States and south Korea against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

The largest-ever war drills will reportedly be staged by unprecedentedly huge aggressor forces, including the U.S. imperialist forces present in south Korea, reinforced U.S. forces from overseas, south Korean puppet troops and forces of various vassal states. To be involved in this muscle-flexing are various types of strategic assets, such as striking groups of U.S. nuclear carriers Ronald Reagan and Carl Vinson, nuclear submarines, nuclear strategic bombers, stealth fighters and Aegis destroyers.

Lots of U.S. war operation groups and nuclear strike means deployed in south Korea and in its vicinity have already begun moving to the positions for invasion of the north.

The enemies openly announced that Key Resolve and Foal Eagle this year would involve rehearsals for putting into more concrete shape the 4D operation for pre-emptive attack on DPRK and, at the same time, drills under the simulated conditions of deployment of Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD).

The above-said sabre-rattling assumes ever-growing danger as it is under way after the U.S. imperialists secretly introduced at least 6 million tons of ammunition and war hardware into south Korea from the end of last year and recently even took measures for the urgent evacuation of families of U.S. forces in south Korea and those with U.S. citizenship staying there.

In view of the prevailing grave situation, the General Staff of the Korean People's Army (KPA) clarifies the following principled stand of the revolutionary armed forces of DPRK:

1. Now that the U.S. imperialists and the south Korean puppet forces have again kicked off the dangerous nuclear war drills against DPRK at its doorstep, our army will counter them with the toughest counteractions as it had already declared.

This stand of ours clarified before the world is by no means empty talk.

2. Should the U.S. imperialists and the south Korean puppet forces fire even a single shell into the waters where the sovereignty of our Republic is exercised, KPA will immediately launch its merciless military counteractions.

They should not forget that our revolutionary armed forces have everything in place and are always on alert.

3. The forces of vassal countries will be targets of our strikes as they are imprudently involved in the ongoing sabre-rattling, toeing the U.S. imperialists' hostile policy towards DPRK.

They have to bear in mind that those lackeys have always met a miserable fate for recklessly running wild, backed by their master.

KPA will mercilessly foil the nuclear war racket of the aggressors with its treasured nuclear sword of justice.

Annex II to the identical letters dated 6 March 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Statement by a spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 4 March 2017 with regard to joint military exercises staged by the United States and south Korea against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

The spokesperson branded the Key Resolve and Foal Eagle joint military exercises being staged by the U S. in south Korea as the most undisguised nuclear war move, to throw the Korean Peninsula and the rest of North-East Asia into nuclear disaster.

Nobody can vouch whether, when the war drills kicked off after the introduction of a lot of nuclear strike means and huge forces into south Korea and the waters, it may go over to an actual war and, consequently. the situation on the Korean Peninsula is again inching close to the brink of a nuclear war.

The U.S. nuclear war drills assume a more dangerous nature as they are staged at a time when it is resorting to the worst political and economic sanctions and pressure against DPRK while finding fault with the latter's measure for bolstering its nuclear force.

The U.S. seeks to convince the public that the joint military exercises are ascribable to DPRK access to nuclear weapons, but this is sophism, making a profound confusion of right and wrong.

DPRK will never remain a passive onlooker to the new U.S. administration, overtly revealing its intention to put military pressure on DPRK and invade it while crying out for "peace by dint of strength".

The spokesperson stressed that the army and people of DPRK are unshakable in their will to further bolster the deterrence for self-defence, with the strategic nuclear force as a pivot in order to put a radical end to the danger of a nuclear war being imposed by the U.S. and deal a merciless retaliatory strike at any provocation by the invaders.

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Security Council

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Letter dated 6 March 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

With reference to the consultations of the Security Council on Burundi to be held on 9 March 2017 and the report of the Secretary-General on Burundi (S/2017/165), I have the honour to submit herewith an updated information note on the situation in Burundi for circulation as a document of the Security Council (see annex).

The updated note aims to bring to your attention that, in his report, the Secretary-General has included some unconfirmed facts and has intentionally forgotten to report many new positive developments in the country during the period under review. Although Burundi still faces some political, security, humanitarian, human rights and development challenges, as do other nations, it is clear that some of the facts mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General have been deliberately exaggerated, while many others are simply raised without evidence. The points contained in the annex will undoubtedly provide the members of the Security Council with additional information to balance their understanding of the real situation in Burundi.

(*Signed*) Albert **Shingiro**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 6 March 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Information note on the current situation in Burundi

Updated on 6 March 2017

1. Introduction

With reference to the consultations of the Security Council on Burundi to be held on 9 March 2017 and the corresponding report of the Secretary-General on Burundi (S/2017/165), this updated note aims to highlight that, in his report, the Secretary-General has included some unconfirmed facts and has forgotten to report many new positive developments in the country during the period under review. Although Burundi still faces some political, security, humanitarian, human rights and development challenges, as do other nations, it is clear that some of the facts mentioned in the report have been deliberately exaggerated, while many others are simply raised without evidence. The following points will undoubtedly provide the members of the Security Council with additional information to balance their understanding of and positions on the real situation in Burundi.

2. Nature of the Burundi problem

The situation in Burundi is a fundamentally political problem without any relevant ethnic dimension, and the Government discourages all stakeholders, especially the politicians of the radical opposition in exile, from any attempt to use the ethnic fibre for political gain.

3. Political developments

The Government of Burundi is continuing its efforts to create an environment conducive to national reconciliation, the return of refugees and exiled politicians and the holding of free, transparent, democratic and credible elections in 2020, in line with international electoral standards. It is in this context that the Government remains very committed to the process of internal dialogue, under the leadership of the National Commission for the Inter-Burundi Dialogue, and to external dialogue, facilitated by the East African Community. The Government of Burundi reiterates its full confidence in and support for the facilitator of the Inter-Burundi Dialogue, Benjamin William Mkapa, former President of Tanzania, and the Commission.

Regarding the voluntary return of refugees, envoys of the Government are visiting the host countries to mobilize Burundian refugees to return to Burundi to participate in the reconstruction of their country. In February, the Minister of the Interior visited a refugee camp in Uganda to reassure the refugees that the conditions are being met for their voluntary return to Burundi. Taking into account the data available to the Ministry, as at 31 December 2016, more than 100,000 Burundians had already returned to Burundi out of about 265,000 Burundians who were in exile. We hope that this return movement will continue. While thanking the host countries for the hospitality they have extended to Burundian refugees, we also invite the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, host

countries and partners of Burundi to assist in accelerating the return of the remaining Burundian refugees to their country. We also call for humanitarian assistance from the partners to be made available to the entire Burundian population (Burundian refugees and those who remain in the country).

In the context of the appeal made by the Government of Burundi to the politicians in exile and after the cancellation of 15 arrest warrants for some of them, several politicians from the radical opposition have decided to return to Burundi to participate in the socioeconomic development efforts of the country and in the next general elections in 2020. With the continuation of the Inter-Burundi Dialogue in good faith and the multiplication of signs of reconciliation, such as the recent release of 2,500 prisoners and the cancellation of legal proceedings against 11 civil society organizations, the return to Burundi of some politicians in exile will continue. Among those who have already arrived in Burundi are Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, former President of the Republic of Burundi; Alice Nzomukunda, former Second Vice-President of the Republic of Burundi; Joseph Ntidendereza, Member of Parliament of the Front for Democracy in Burundi-Nyakuri (FRODEBU-Nyakuri), a radical opposition party; Mathias Basabose, Member of Parliament and former high-ranking leader of the National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD), the ruling party; and Félix Ndayisenga, former Ambassador of Burundi to Belgium and member of the radical opposition.

In order to open up more political space, the Government of Burundi often organizes meetings for all political parties recognized by national law to discuss the organization of the upcoming 2020 elections in peace, security and transparency. The last meeting was held on 11 October 2016. The Minister of the Interior convened a gathering of political party representatives and political actors to discuss the role of political leaders in the context of peace and dialogue in preparation for the 2020 elections. This permanent dialogue between the Government and political parties and political actors will continue in good faith and with the firm determination to avoid the recurrence of the post-election violence scenario of 2015. We hope that the politicians returning from exile will join this process of dialogue in order to prepare the 2020 elections in a spirit of political tolerance.

With regard to paragraph 71 of the report of the Secretary-General, referring to the intention of the current President to run for what the report calls a "fourth term", it should be recalled that the current President is exercising his second term resulting from popular elections, in accordance with article 96 of the Constitution of Burundi and the rulings of the Constitutional Court and the East African Court of Justice on the legality of the candidacy of the President in the 2015 elections. The President is therefore governed by the current Constitution, which establishes a limit of two presidential terms. It should also be pointed out and recalled that constitutional affairs fall exclusively within the sovereignty of Member States and should not be the subject of comments or discussions at the United Nations. Getting involved in such matters would violate the Charter of the United Nations and the sovereignty of Burundi.

4. Political dialogue

In order to calm the political tensions after the democratic elections of 2015, President Pierre Nkurunziza set up the National Commission for the Inter-Burundi Dialogue to find lasting solutions to Burundi's political, economic and social concerns. The Commission has already submitted its preliminary report to the President and the Parliament. At the same time, at the Summit of Heads of State of the East African Community, the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, was appointed to mediate the Inter-Burundi Dialogue with all peaceful stakeholders and the former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Benjamin William Mkapa, was appointed head facilitator of the Dialogue.

The facilitator has already organized several Dialogue sessions in Arusha, Tanzania, and the process is proceeding normally. The objective of the Dialogue is not to challenge the institutions elected in 2015, but rather to ensure that the post-electoral tensions of 2015 do not recur in the 2020 elections, to call for non-violence and a culture of peace and to create an environment conducive to the voluntary return of refugees and exiled politicians in preparation for the forthcoming elections in 2020.

The Government of Burundi remains committed to promoting an inclusive Inter-Burundi Dialogue, excluding only the 13 May 2015 coup plotters who are sought under international arrest warrants, in accordance with the principles of the African Union and the United Nations and Security Council resolutions 2248 (2015) and 2279 (2016). Coup plotters must have the same treatment everywhere.

From 16 to 19 February 2017, the facilitator brought together in Arusha, Tanzania, several politicians from the opposition, from within and outside the country, and from the ruling party, CNDD-FDD, and the Ombudsman for an exchange on the ongoing Dialogue. Further Dialogue sessions are planned in the near future. The facilitator plans to successfully conclude the ongoing Dialogue process before the end of 2017.

5. Security situation

In the area of security, while recognizing some challenges, we can say that, compared with 2015, the security situation has been improved and returned to normalcy throughout the national territory, except for isolated incidents of banditry and crime that Burundi is trying to eradicate.

The defence and security forces, composed in the spirit of balance of the Arusha Agreement (50 per cent Hutu and 50 per cent Tutsi) ensure peace and security for all with professionalism, neutrality and patriotism. Those who violate national laws or human rights are punished in accordance with the law. Dozens of policemen and some soldiers are currently in prison in that connection.

The defence and security forces are united in their ethnic, regional, religious and gender diversity to defend Burundi against internal or external aggression. The cohesion of the security forces remains a key factor for peace and stability in the country. Since criminal responsibility is individual, the approach of ethicizing a few rare cases of arrests of military elements that violate laws, as seen in paragraph 23 of the report of the Secretary-General, is very dangerous and should be avoided as

much as possible. It is therefore an error of assessment to be avoided in his next report. It is well known that the situation in Burundi is a fundamentally political problem without any relevant ethnic dimension. The Government discourages all stakeholders, especially the politicians of the radical opposition in exile, from any attempt to use the ethnic fibre for political gain.

Let us condemn the term "militia" chosen in the report to qualify the Imbonerakure (see para. 20), the youth league of the ruling party. This unfair term was never used in the agreed language of the Security Council, which has always preferred the cautious language of "youth affiliated with the political party". These young people participate every Saturday in community development works in a spirit of social coexistence and political tolerance. We are very surprised that in his report the Secretary-General does not say a word about the young people of the radical opposition who attacked the military camps, engaged in targeted killings of ruling party leaders, threw grenades into public squares and burned alive innocent people during and after the violent insurrections. We do believe that this deliberate oversight upsets the content of the report.

It should be stressed, however, that no one is above the law in Burundi. We do not believe that all young people of the ruling party are innocent. As all other citizens, those who violate national laws are punished without discrimination to the full extent of the law. Since criminal responsibility is individual, the attitude of generalizing and putting the entire youth wing of the ruling party in the same basket is very dangerous and should be avoided as much as possible.

6. Human rights

In the area of human rights, we recall that the Government of Burundi attaches great importance to human rights issues. Burundi has adopted a zero tolerance policy in this area that we are working hard to implement. Burundi firmly adheres to the principles of objectivity, non-selectivity and non-politicization of human rights. Burundi recognizes, however, that there are some isolated cases of human rights violations, as there are elsewhere. It is for this reason that we have set up judicial inquiry commissions to shed light on allegations of human rights violations from the beginning of the insurrection to the present day, and some reports have already been made public. It is well known that the promotion of human rights is a long process, an ideal for all, and that no nation has reached its peak, even after more than 100 years of democratic experimentation. For the young Burundian democracy, the road is still long, but the good will to move forward is there and real. The support of our partners remains necessary in this regard.

With regard to the allegations of enforced disappearances, it should be pointed out that several young people who fled the country for military training in neighbouring countries were declared as missing persons. In February alone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo handed over 150 young people to Burundi, several of whom had been declared missing. Enforced disappearances are a global phenomenon to which Burundi attaches great importance. Burundi intends to join other nations in combating this global evil. The number of cases mentioned in the report has been exaggerated and the facts have not been proved since no names have been provided in support of the allegations. Burundi is a small country, everyone

knows everyone. In the case of an enforced disappearance, everyone would know about the case the following day.

7. Press freedom

In the area of press freedom, Burundi recently authorized the reopening of three private radio stations that had been destroyed during the coup d'état on 13 May 2015 and the opening of new private radio stations. Today, more than 24 private and public radio stations, plus international stations (Radio France Internationale, Voice of America, Deutsche Welle and others), 7 television stations, 24 newspapers, 17 websites, 12 associations and professional bodies of the press and 2 news agencies work normally on a daily basis in Burundi. It should also be emphasized that there are no journalists in prison in Burundi. Efforts to improve the freedom of the press in Burundi are continuing. It is a long process, as it is everywhere, and support from the international community in the field of capacity-building is needed.

8. Freedom of assembly, opinion, association and religion

All these freedoms are recognized in the Constitution and other national laws of Burundi. The Ministry of the Interior has already registered 6,500 non-profit associations, of which 100 have been registered since January 2016; more than 40 political parties are operating freely in the country in accordance with national law; and more than 550 religious groups are working freely as well.

Concerning civil society, Burundi has just cancelled the legal proceedings against 11 non-governmental organizations that had been closed during the investigations into the failed coup d'état of 13 May 2015. There is not a single member of civil society in prison in Burundi. This spirit of openness of the Government will be pursued, to promote the work of more than 6,500 non-governmental organizations operating freely in Burundi.

9. Judicial field

Last year, the Government of Burundi cancelled 15 international arrest warrants for certain politicians and members of civil society and the media in exile abroad. It also freed 2,000 prisoners in 2016 and 2,500 others were granted a pardon by the President of the Republic on the occasion of his new year wishes for 2017. On 23 January 2017, the Government started the effective implementation of the presidential pardon in favour of 2,500 prisoners in various prisons throughout the country, including those who were detained following the insurrectional movements of 8 March 2014 and 2015. To date, 2,264 of these prisoners have been released and the remaining prisoners will be released before the end of March 2017.

10. Cooperation with the United Nations

Burundi's most ardent wish is to strengthen good relations of cooperation with the United Nations, our common organization in which we believe. But successfully reinforcing cooperation depends on the willingness of both parties to refrain from taking measures and producing unbalanced reports that are liable to undermine the good relations existing between Burundi and the United Nations.

The dialogue between Burundi and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the cooperation agreement to set up an OHCHR office in Bujumbura is progressing normally and should be concluded in the near future. In the spirit of strengthening the existing cooperation between the United Nations and the Government of Burundi for greater transparency in the protection of human rights field, the Government of Burundi transmitted on 24 February 2017 to OHCHR in Geneva the draft agreement between the Republic of Burundi and the United Nations concerning the establishment of an office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Burundi. The Government of Burundi is looking forward to receiving feedback in order to finalize and sign the agreement in the coming days.

With regard to the cooperation agreement between Burundi and the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General, Burundi is ready to pursue in good faith frank discussions on the draft agreement proposed by the Secretary-General in order to sign the consensual text as soon as possible. We also believe that the appointment of the new United Nations focal points that will be covering Burundi should accelerate the process of signing this agreement between the two parties. The Department of Political Affairs should play this role.

It should also be pointed out that military and human rights observers from the African Union are on the ground with the full cooperation of the Government of Burundi. Both parties have the good will to conclude the pending memorandum of understanding as soon as possible.

11. What should be done by the international community?

The international community should:

(a) Understand the situation in Burundi as a fundamentally political problem without any relevant ethnic dimension and discourage all stakeholders, especially the politicians of the radical opposition in exile, from any attempt to use the ethnic fibre for political gain;

(b) Continue to promote full respect for the principle of national ownership and the regional dimension in dealing with the situation in Burundi and let the Burundians first and then the region take the lead in the Inter-Burundi Dialogue process and avoid as much as possible any step towards imposing solutions from the outside. The role of the international community would then be limited to providing technical and logistical support in accordance with the key principles of the Charter of the United Nations. In the same vein, the sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and unity of Burundi must be fully respected;

(c) Change approaches in dealing with the situation in Burundi by replacing the disproportionate political pressure with incentive measures to commend the Government on its efforts to consolidate peace and stabilize the country. The measures taken include the effective resumption of cooperation with the European Union in sectors that are very relevant to the vulnerable population, such as health, education, agriculture, food security and direct budgetary support to the Government for vulnerable groups, namely women, children and youth. It will also be necessary to avoid political pressure on Burundian troops deployed in

peacekeeping missions in many countries. They are fighting against terrorism for our collective security;

(d) Understand that the convening of non-essential meetings on Burundi in the United Nations system and the production of unbalanced and politically motivated reports on the situation in Burundi may be a factor of destabilization rather than a factor in reducing political tensions. The opposition takes advantage of these meetings to commit terrorist acts in Burundi in order to attract the attention of the international community. The United Nations should continue to support the National Commission for the Inter-Burundi Dialogue and the mediation of the East African Community and allow it to lead the inter-Burundian peace process;

(e) Encourage the States that are sheltering the coup plotters of 13 May 2015 and other fugitive criminals sought by justice to hand them over to the Government of Burundi so that they can be brought to justice in conformity with national law. Requesting amnesty in favour of coup plotters goes against the promotion of the rule of law and the fight against impunity. It also violates the democratic principles and values that are against any change of political power by anti-constitutional means;

(f) Encourage countries that have hosted Burundian refugees following the 2015 crisis and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to facilitate their voluntary return to the country. The Government is ready to welcome them and settle them in their communities. Recently, the former President, Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, and four other leaders of the radical opposition returned home after a period of exile in Belgium. They live normally in the country without being disturbed and exercise all their constitutional rights. The international community should encourage the other politicians who have fled the country to return home to build the economy of Burundi;

(g) Support the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission to shed light on the crimes committed in Burundi since independence with the aim of definitively reconciling Burundians and thus avoiding repeating the history of civil wars;

(h) Assist the Government of Burundi with multidimensional support to stimulate the economic and socioeconomic recovery of local communities. Efforts to address humanitarian, economic and social needs are urgently needed; however, addressing the root causes of the situation will require a broader and coherent humanitarian, socioeconomic, peacebuilding and resilience approach. Those efforts should run in parallel in order to help Burundi make progress in the implementation of the 17 global Sustainable Development Goals;

(i) Help rebuild trust between the Government and some members of the international community. We believe that the Peacebuilding Commission configuration should continue to serve as a forum for dialogue between Burundi and its international partners to move forward and avoid any counterproductive confrontations. Burundi wants to turn the page;

(j) Provide assistance to the Government in order to create an environment conducive to the holding of free, credible, democratic and transparent elections in 2020 in order to avoid the 2015 scenario and pave the way for a new era of sustainable peace and inclusive development.

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Letter dated 6 March 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to resolution 2339 (2017), by which the Security Council decided to extend the mandate of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic until 28 February 2018.

Accordingly, I wish to inform you that, after consulting the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic, I have appointed the following experts:

Mr. Luis Ángel Benavides Hernández, humanitarian (Mexico)
Ms. Mélanie De Groof, arms (Belgium)
Mr. Romain Esmenjaud, finance/natural resources (France)
Mr. Paul-Simon Handy, regional (Cameroon)
Mr. Ilyas Oussedik, armed groups (Algeria)

I have designated Mr. Esmenjaud to serve as Coordinator of the Panel.

I should be grateful if you would bring this matter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

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Letter dated 6 March 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith humanitarian and information bulletins from the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic for the period from 28 February to 6 March 2017 (see annex).

I should be grateful if this letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) P. **Iliichev**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 6 March 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Humanitarian bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (28 February 2017)

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by the Russian Federation

The Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides carried out eight humanitarian operations: six in Aleppo city, one in Damascus city and one in Kassab in Ladhiqiyah governorate.

In Aleppo city, 4.8 tons of bottled drinking water and 0.94 tons of bread were delivered to the Hananu, Balad, northern Old Aleppo and Shaykh Maqsud districts and to schools (in the Salihin and Ashrafiyah districts).

The residents of Kassab (Ladhiqiyah governorate) received 4.28 tons of food and 1 ton of urgent necessities, clothing and blankets.

In Damascus city (Wafidin district), 2.4 tons of food were delivered to civilians.

Over the past 24 hours, humanitarian assistance has been provided to 3,720 residents. In total, 13.42 tons of humanitarian cargoes have been distributed to the population.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by international organizations

Russian airplanes parachuted 20.3 tons of humanitarian cargoes (food products) to the city of Dayr al-Zawr, which was received by the Syrian authorities through the United Nations.

Information bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (1 March 2017)

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, three ceasefire agreements have been signed with populated areas in Abu Rabi' and Damis in Hama governorate, and with Tall al-Kurdi in Damascus governorate.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process has increased to 1,281.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire of 27 February 2016 is unchanged — it is still 110.

The number of populated areas which the Syrian government forces have liberated from armed groups of the international terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) since 1 January 2017 remains unchanged at 72.

Over the past 24 hours, government forces have gained control of 64.1 square kilometres. A total area of 2,352.2 square kilometres has been liberated since 1 January 2017.

Observance of the ceasefire regime

At 0000 hours on 30 December 2016, a ceasefire came into force in accordance with the consolidated agreement on a comprehensive resolution of the Syrian crisis.

The number of Syrian opposition armed groups that have joined the ceasefire regime is unchanged — it is still 64.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the consolidated agreement has reported 10 violations in the following governorates: 4 in Damascus, 4 in Ladhiqiyah and 2 in Hama.

The Turkish representative office reported 14 violations of the consolidated agreement in the following governorates: 4 in Damascus, 3 in Hama, 3 in Idlib, 2 in Dar'a, 1 in Aleppo and 1 in Homs.

During its investigations of these incidents, the Russian representative office was unable to confirm the 14 violations.

Humanitarian bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (1 March 2017)

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by the Russian Federation

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides has carried out seven humanitarian operations: six in Aleppo governorate and one in Homs governorate.

In Aleppo city, 0.94 tons of bread and 3,000 portions of hot food were distributed (to the Hananu al-Ummaliyah, Qasilah and Shaykh Maqsud districts, to mosques in the Maqar al-Anbiya' and Hamdaniyah-3 districts, and to a student hostel in the Shahba' al-Qadimah district).

In Wadi Dhahab (Homs governorate), 3.29 tons of food, medicine and non-food items were distributed.

Over the past 24 hours, humanitarian assistance has been provided to 4,700 residents. In total, 4.95 tons of humanitarian cargoes have been distributed to the population.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by other States and international organizations

Russian airplanes parachuted 20.4 tons of humanitarian cargoes (food products) to the city of Dayr al-Zawr, which was received by the Syrian authorities through the United Nations.

Information bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (2 March 2017)

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, two ceasefire agreements have been signed with Uyun al-Sha'rah (Homs governorate) and Habash (Damascus governorate).

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process has increased to 1,283.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire of 27 February 2016 is unchanged — it is still 111.

Over the past 24 hours, government forces have gained control of 73.5 square kilometres. A total area of 2,425.7 square kilometres has been liberated since 1 January 2017.

Observance of the ceasefire regime

At 0000 hours on 30 December 2016, a ceasefire came into force in accordance with the consolidated agreement on a comprehensive resolution of the Syrian crisis.

The number of Syrian opposition armed groups that have joined the ceasefire regime is unchanged — it is still 64.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the consolidated agreement has reported five violations: four in Damascus governorate and one in Ladhiqiyah governorate.

The Turkish representative office has reported seven violations of the consolidated agreement in the following governorates: four in Homs, two in Damascus and one in Aleppo.

During its investigations of these incidents, the Russian representative office was unable to confirm the seven violations.

Humanitarian bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (2 March 2017)

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by the Russian Federation

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides has carried out eight humanitarian operations in the following governorates: six in Aleppo, one in Ladhiqiyah and one in Suwayda'.

A total of 0.94 tons of bread, 500 portions of hot food, 400 food parcels and 6 tons of drinking water were delivered to civilians in Aleppo city (to the Jibrin temporary accommodation facility for civilians, to the Hananu, Bayadah and Shaykh Maqsud districts and to schools in the Ashrafiyah and Akramiyah districts) and in Risas (Suwayda' governorate).

Sixty sets of gifts, games and school supplies were distributed to children in the Masa'i Khayriyah Orphanage in Ladhiqiyah city.

Over the past 24 hours, humanitarian assistance has been provided to 3,200 residents. In total, 10 tons of humanitarian cargoes have been distributed to the population.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by other States and international organizations

Over the past 24 hours the United Nations and partners have continued to provide medical, psychological and legal assistance to the Syrian Arab Republic. Work is also continuing to restore infrastructure and provide temporary accommodation to those in need.

Information bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (3 March 2017)

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, eight ceasefire agreements have been signed with Ghabaghib in Dar'a governorate, with Hawayir, Jadidah and Kaf Yahud in Hama governorate, with Sath al-Ifrit, Wardiyah and Zawr al-Mazra'ah in Homs governorate and with Kawm al-Wayisiyah in Qunaytiryah governorate.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process has increased to 1,291.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire of 27 February 2016 is unchanged — it is still 114.

Syrian government forces have liberated 91 populated areas from armed groups of the international terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Over the past 24 hours, government forces have gained control of 186 square kilometres. A total area of 2,611.7 square kilometres has been liberated since 1 January 2017.

Observance of the ceasefire regime

At 0000 hours on 30 December 2016, a ceasefire came into force in accordance with the consolidated agreement on a comprehensive resolution of the Syrian crisis.

The number of Syrian opposition armed groups that have joined the ceasefire regime is unchanged — it is still 64.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the consolidated agreement has reported 11 violations in the following governorates: 7 in Ladhiqiyah, 2 in Damascus, and 2 in Hama.

The Turkish representative office has reported 13 violations of the consolidated agreement in the following governorates: 5 in Damascus, 3 in Aleppo, 3 in Homs, 1 in Dar'a and 1 in Hama.

During its investigation of these incidents, the Russian representative office confirmed one ceasefire violation. It has not confirmed the other 12 incidents.

Humanitarian bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (3 March 2017)

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by the Russian Federation

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides has carried out seven humanitarian operations in Aleppo city, during which 1 ton of bread, 3,000 portions of hot food and 350 food parcels have been distributed to civilians in the Tishrin, Qadi Askar, Ballat, North New Aleppo, Shaykh Maksud and Sulaymaniah districts.

Over the past 24 hours, humanitarian assistance has been provided to 3,350 residents. In total, 3.4 tons of humanitarian cargoes have been distributed to the population.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by international organizations

Russian airplanes parachuted 20.4 tons of humanitarian cargoes (food products) to the city of Dayr al-Zawr, which was received by the Syrian authorities through the United Nations.

Information bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (4 March 2017)

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, one ceasefire agreement has been signed with Hawsh Mubarak in Damascus governorate.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process has increased to 1,292.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire of 27 February 2016 is unchanged — it is still 115.

Syrian government forces have liberated 97 populated areas from armed groups of the international terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Over the past 24 hours, government forces have gained control of 56 square kilometres. A total area of 2,667.7 square kilometres has been liberated since 1 January 2017.

Observance of the ceasefire regime

At 0000 hours on 30 December 2016, a ceasefire came into force in accordance with the consolidated agreement on a comprehensive resolution of the Syrian crisis.

The number of Syrian opposition armed groups that have joined the ceasefire regime is unchanged — it is still 64.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the consolidated agreement has reported four violations in the following governorates: two in Hama, one in Damascus and one in Ladhiqiyah.

The Turkish representative office has reported 12 violations of the consolidated agreement in the following governorates: 8 in Aleppo, 1 in Damascus, 1 in Dar'a, 1 in Homs and 1 in Ladhiqiyah.

During its investigations of these incidents, the Russian representative office was unable to confirm the 12 violations.

Humanitarian bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (4 March 2017)

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by the Russian Federation

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides has carried out two humanitarian operations: one in Aleppo governorate and one in Damascus governorate.

One ton of bread and 1,000 food parcels were distributed to Manbij in Aleppo city.

Four hundred food parcels were delivered to the residents of Dahiyat al-Assad in Damascus governorate.

Over the past 24 hours, humanitarian assistance has been provided to 2,120 residents. In total, 8 tons of humanitarian cargoes have been distributed to the population.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by international organizations

Over the past 24 hours the United Nations and partners have continued to provide medical, psychological and legal assistance to the Syrian Arab Republic. Work is also continuing to restore infrastructure and provide temporary accommodation to those in need.

Information bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (5 March 2017)

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, two ceasefire agreements have been signed with Jurayjis and Suwayri in Hama governorate.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process has increased to 1,294.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire of 27 February 2016 is unchanged — it is still 115.

The number of populated areas which Syrian government forces have liberated from armed groups of the international terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has increased to 99.

Over the past 24 hours, government forces have gained control of 22.7 square kilometres. A total area of 2,690.4 square kilometres has been liberated since 1 January 2017.

Observance of the ceasefire regime

At 0000 hours on 30 December 2016, a ceasefire came into force in accordance with the consolidated agreement on a comprehensive resolution of the Syrian crisis.

The number of Syrian opposition armed groups that have joined the ceasefire regime is unchanged — it is still 64.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the consolidated agreement has reported six violations: four in Damascus governorate and two in Ladhiqiyah governorate.

The Turkish representative office has reported 15 violations of the consolidated agreement in the following governorates: 6 in Aleppo, 5 in Homs, 2 in Hama, 1 in Damascus and 1 in Idlib.

During its investigations of these incidents, the Russian representative office confirmed one ceasefire violation. It has not confirmed the other 14 violations.

Humanitarian bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (5 March 2017)

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by the Russian Federation

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides has carried out eight humanitarian operations in the following governorates: six in Aleppo, one in Ladhiqiyah and one in Suwayda'.

One ton of bread and 3,000 portions of warm food were delivered to the residents of districts in Aleppo city.

Four hundred food parcels were delivered to residents.

Over the past 24 hours, humanitarian assistance has been provided to 3,908 residents. In total, 4.5 tons of humanitarian cargoes have been distributed to the population.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by international organizations

Over the past 24 hours the United Nations and partners have continued to provide food, medical, psychological and legal assistance to the Syrian Arab Republic. Work is also continuing to restore infrastructure and provide temporary accommodation to those in need.

Information bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (6 March 2017)

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, 23 ceasefire agreements have been signed with Fiq, Subaynah, Masharah, Suwaysah, Marum Ughlan, Kiswah al-Gharbi, Qadsiya al-Nazihin, Sayah, Khushniyah, Mukaybah, Zabdin, Ayzadij, Umm Batinah, Battikh, Hamidiyah, Bab al-Sahr, Artuz, Arsiyah, Mafraq Sakhirah, Jayd al-Fadl, Jubbata al-Khashab and Qunaytirah in Qunaytirah governorate and with Budi in Ladhiqiyah governorate.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process has increased to 1,317.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

Over the past 24 hours, six application forms have been signed. The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire of 27 February 2016 has increased to 121.

The number of populated areas which Syrian government forces have liberated from armed groups of the international terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has increased to 106.

Over the past 24 hours, government forces have gained control of 43.3 square kilometres. A total area of 2,733.7 square kilometres has been liberated since 1 January 2017.

Observance of the ceasefire regime

At 0000 hours on 30 December 2016, a ceasefire came into force in accordance with the consolidated agreement on a comprehensive resolution of the Syrian crisis.

The number of Syrian opposition armed groups that have joined the ceasefire regime is unchanged — it is still 64.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the consolidated agreement has reported 12 violations in the following governorates: 6 in Damascus, 3 in Ladhiqiyah and 3 in Hama.

The Turkish representative office has reported 27 violations of the consolidated agreement in the following governorates: 8 in Damascus, 7 in Aleppo, 4 in Idlib, 3 in Homs, 2 in Dar'a, 2 in Hama and 1 in Ladhiqiyah.

During its investigations of these incidents, the Russian representative office confirmed one ceasefire violation and was unable to investigate two violations. The other 24 incidents have not been confirmed.

United Nations A/71/830–S/2017/196

General Assembly
Security Council

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General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 32
Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Identical letters dated 7 March 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement dated 5 March 2017 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the closure of the so-called crossing points in the occupied Abkhazia region.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex issued as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 32, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kaha **Imnadze**
Permanent Representative

17-03912 (E) 130317

Please recycle

Annex to the identical letters dated 7 March 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the closure of the so-called crossing points in the occupied Abkhazia region

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia condemns the closure of the so-called crossing points by the Russian occupation regime in the villages of Nabakevi and Otobaia in the Abkhazia region. It is noteworthy that, during 2016, the representatives of the occupation regime closed the so-called crossing points in the villages of Tagiloni and Lekukhona. On 5 March 2017, they abolished two more so-called crossing points along the occupation line.

This decision grossly violates the fundamental rights to freedom of movement, privacy and family life and access to education and health care for the local population, and serves to isolate the occupied Abkhazia region from the rest of the world. The decrease in the number of the so-called crossing points along the occupation line will aggravate an already difficult humanitarian situation in the Abkhazia region, especially the life of vulnerable groups, such as older persons, people in need of medical care or medical evacuation and schoolchildren, which will provoke further destabilization of the situation on the ground.

Despite clear-cut appeals by the international community, including the United Nations, the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the United States of America, Lithuania and Japan, it seems that the Russian occupation regime in Sokhumi made the decision to continue the destructive policy and to impede the peaceful conflict-resolution efforts of the Georgian Government.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs calls upon the Russian Federation to refrain from the provocative actions against Georgia, respect the fundamental principles of international law and the commitments taken under the European Union-mediated 12 August 2008 ceasefire agreement and take a responsible approach to the prevention of an escalation of tensions on the ground.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs appeals to the international community to duly assess the tendency to close so-called crossing points and isolate the occupied regions and the so-called referendum to be held on 9 April in the Tskhinvali region, and to take effective measures with regard to Russia's illegal steps to undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.

United Nations S/2017/197

Security Council

Distr.: General
7 March 2017

Original: English

Letter dated 7 March 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to convey herewith a report of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on "the status of the implementation of the plan for the destruction of Libya's remaining category 2 chemical weapons outside the territory of Libya" (see annex). The report, dated 24 February 2017, covers the period from 23 January to 22 February 2017.

The report was prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of OPCW Executive Council decision EC-M-52/DEC.1 of 20 July 2016 and Security Council resolution 2298 (2016) of 22 July 2016, for transmission to the Security Council.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex were brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

17-03722 (E) 090317

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Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Status of the implementation of the plan for the destruction of Libya's remaining category 2 chemical weapons outside the territory of Libya", prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of decision EC-M-52/DEC.1 of 20 July 2016 of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and Security Council resolution 2298 (2016) of 22 July 2016, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). The report covers the period from 23 January to 22 February 2017 and meets the reporting requirements set out in Executive Council decisions EC-M-52/DEC.2 of 27 July 2016 and EC-M-53/DEC.1 of 26 August 2016.

(*Signed*) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Report of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Status of the implementation of the plan for the destruction of Libya's remaining category 2 chemical weapons outside the territory of Libya

1. At its Fifty-Second Meeting, the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") adopted a decision on the "Destruction of Libya's Remaining Chemical Weapons" (EC-M-52/DEC.1, dated 20 July 2016) and requested the Director-General to assist Libya in developing a modified plan of destruction of Libya's Category 2 chemical weapons. On 22 July 2016, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 2298 (2016), welcoming and endorsing the decision by the Council and requesting the Director-General, through the Secretary-General, to report to the Security Council on a regular basis until the destruction is complete and verified.

2. At the conclusion of its Fifty-Second Meeting, the Council adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Libya's Remaining Category 2 Chemical Weapons" (EC-M-52/DEC.2, dated 27 July 2016). In operative paragraph 17 of that decision, the Council requested the Director-General to report to the Council on a monthly basis on the implementation of the decision. This sixth monthly report covers the period from 23 January to 22 February 2017.

Progress in the elimination of Libyan chemical weapons by the State Party hosting destruction activities

3. Gesellschaft zur Entsorgung von chemischen Kampfstoffen und Rüstungsaltlasten mbH (GEKA mbH), the designated destruction facility at Munster, Germany, completed the destruction of the 2-chloroethanol in Incineration Plant 1 ("Munster-1") on 17 December 2016.

4. A team from the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") inspected GEKA mbH from 23 to 27 January and reported that, as at 20 January 2017, 238.655 metric tonnes, or 100% of the tributylamine had been destroyed. This destruction was accomplished using the afterburner of the plasma arc system. No problems were encountered with the destruction process.

5. GEKA mbH informed the Secretariat that, due to delays in obtaining the final approvals for the neutralisation system, destruction had begun using the incinerator at Munster-1. The first tank to be processed contained a mixture of PCl_3 and $POCl_3$, as determined during initial sampling. This tank presents fewer hazards due to the combination of chemicals. The contents will be fed slowly into the incinerator to prevent damage to it, and the feed rate will be increased based on the reaction. Samples from the remaining tanks indicate the contents as PCl_3. GEKA mbH will continue to pursue the required permits and will change over to neutralisation upon receipt of the approvals.

6. Secretariat personnel will travel to Germany to conduct an inspection at GEKA mbH from 27 to 30 March 2017, and will be accompanied by two observers from the Libyan National Authority. Observations from the inspection of the destruction activities will continue to be included in the monthly updates.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Libya

7. The Secretariat inspected the destruction operations at GEKA mbH between 23 and 27 January 2017. The Secretariat inspection team confirmed that all monitoring equipment in place for the purposes of verification is functioning as intended.

8. The Secretariat will continue to discuss with GEKA mbH the timelines for the incineration and neutralisation of the remaining chemicals during the next inspection.

9. As previously reported, the Secretariat was informed that during decanting operations at the Ruwagha storage facility, one container experienced an exothermic reaction, causing the material inside to polymerise. The OPCW Laboratory has completed an analysis of the sample received from Libya, which was taken from the tank in question. In addition to determining the composition of the sample, the Laboratory was requested to ascertain whether the contents of the tank could be regarded as destroyed, or if residual declared chemicals were still present in amounts that would require the waste to be further chemically treated, as well as if the tank contents presented a proliferation risk.

10. Using gas chromatography-mass spectrometry analysis, both PCl_3 and $POCl_3$ were detected in the sample, in the region of 5% by weight. Observations made during the analysis of the sample indicate a potential means of destruction. The highly viscous mass found in the tank is dissolvable in water, and the chemicals requiring destruction (PCl_3 and $POCl_3$) will hydrolyse to harmless, non-scheduled chemicals.

11. Owing to the levels of the Category 2 chemicals remaining in the container (approximately 5%), the viscous nature of the remnants, and the limited ability to recover any useable material, the Secretariat is in a position to affirm that the material no longer presents a proliferation threat.

12. The Secretariat, with assistance from Canada, will obtain the services of an expert company to assist Libya with the development of a programme and budget for the further destruction of the remaining tank and the clean-up of the Ruwagha tank farm, to include the decanted tanks.

Overall costs and status of the trust fund

13. On 1 August 2016, the Secretariat issued a Note calling for voluntary contributions to the new trust fund for support to Libya (S/1400/2016, dated 1 August 2016). As at 31 December 2016, the trust fund had received over EUR 1.2 million, with contributions having been received from Canada, Cyprus, Finland, New Zealand, and the United States of America. As at 21 February 2017, EUR 414,792 had been disbursed from the trust fund for activities related to the destruction of Libya's Category 2 chemical weapons. Invoices are anticipated from GEKA mbH for the purchase and installation of verification-related cameras and monitors.

14. The Secretariat is continuing to work with Canada on procuring the services of an expert company to work with Libya on the preparation of a budget for the work related to the disposal of the contents of the remaining tank and clean-up of the decanted tanks at Ruwagha. The European Union has expressed an interest in contributing to this effort. The Director-General would once again like to express his appreciation to those States Parties that have already made or have committed to making voluntary contributions to the trust fund.

Annex to the letter dated 7 March 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council's open debate entitled "Trafficking in persons in conflict situations: forced labour, slavery and other similar practices" (14 march 2017)

Background

1. Human trafficking and modern slavery are global crimes, with victims and offenders often moving across borders between source, transit and destination countries. There are varying estimates of the total number of victims of modern slavery across the world. The hidden nature of trafficking and modern slavery and the methodological differences in the calculation of estimates impose limits on the data available, but the International Labour Organization estimates that there are 21 million victims of forced labour alone, 5.5 million of whom are children, and that this activity generates $150 billion in illegal profits each year.[1]

2. Complex conflicts involving armed groups, terrorists and powerful transnational criminal networks have led to a rise in the exploitation of people through trafficking. This exploitation takes many forms,[2] including forced labour, slavery and recruitment by armed groups. Exploitation in those situations can occur because of the increased vulnerability of people fleeing conflict as a result of widespread human, material and economic losses, a general erosion of the rule of law, the concentration of large numbers of vulnerable people in informal dwellings and camps, and new or increased activity by armed and terrorist groups.

Transnational organized crime and terrorist groups

3. Criminal networks and traffickers adapt their approaches during crises, targeting groups that become vulnerable, such as displaced populations. Armed groups, terrorists and criminal networks use the various forms of exploitation to fund and sustain their operations, often exacerbating and perpetuating conflict situations. This disregard for the rights and dignity of people caught up in conflict and the humanitarian crises that frequently accompany them devastate communities and pose a threat to international peace and security.

4. The link between trafficking in persons, organized crime and terrorism was recognized by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/291 on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review, in which the Assembly expressed concern that terrorists might benefit from transnational organized crime in some regions, including from trafficking in persons. This has been demonstrated in Libya, where the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons have provided both direct and indirect funding to armed and terrorist groups and undermined the State further by fuelling corruption (see S/2016/949).

5. On 16 December 2015, the Security Council held its first thematic briefing on human trafficking in situations of conflict (see S/PV.7585). In the statement by the President of the Security Council adopted at that meeting (S/PRST/2015/25), the Council requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council on progress made

[1] See www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/statistics/lang--en/index.htm.

[2] See the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2237, No. 39574).

to implement better existing mechanisms countering trafficking in persons. In the consequential report by the Secretary-General (S/2016/949) and Security Council resolution 2331 (2016), substantial steps were made to establish links between trafficking in all its forms, terrorism and conflict. In resolution 2331 (2016), the Council also condemned all instances of trafficking in persons in areas affected by armed conflict situations and stressed that trafficking in persons undermined the rule of law and contributed to other forms of transnational organized crime.

Vulnerability

6. In resolution 2331 (2016), the Security Council highlighted in particular the case of sexual exploitation through human trafficking and its use as a tactic of terrorism by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh) and other terrorist and armed groups. ISIL, Boko Haram and other groups openly advocate the enslavement of women and children. They forcibly recruit and use children in conflict situations and press civilians into forced labour that profits or sustains the groups. Globally, 79 per cent of all detected victims of trafficking are women and children.[3] In conflict situations, this often manifests itself through child, early and forced marriage, exploitative domestic work and sexual slavery. Men and boys are also frequently exploited through forced labour, for example for the exploitation of natural resources, or as combatants. The recruitment of children into armed groups where they are often exposed to high levels of violence, abuse, exploitation and injury has been widely documented. The United Nations Children's Fund estimates that between 15,000 and 16,000 children have been victims of recruitment by armed forces and groups since the civil war began in South Sudan in December 2013.[4]

7. The use of human trafficking as a tactic by armed groups and criminal networks in armed conflict is a particular risk to displaced communities, whether people are displaced internally or become refugees in neighbouring countries. People escaping from war and persecution are particularly vulnerable to trafficking. In conflict situations, such as in Libya and Mali,[5] armed groups and criminal networks prey on migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as citizens, further destabilizing the countries and fuelling criminality and violence. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimates that about 60 per cent of victims of trafficking who have been detected globally are foreigners in the country where they have been identified, most of them migrants (S/2016/949, para. 4).

Response of the United Nations

8. In resolution 2331 (2016), the Security Council called upon Member States to take decisive and immediate action to prevent, criminalize, investigate, prosecute and ensure accountability of those who engage in trafficking in persons, and to disrupt and dismantle the networks involved. The Council underscored the importance of international law enforcement cooperation, encouraged Member States to build strong partnerships with the private sector and civil society and urged a strengthened humanitarian community's response to protect the most vulnerable. It welcomed further briefings on trafficking in persons in armed conflict and requested the Secretary General to report within 12 months on strengthening coordination within the United Nations system and to make recommendations.

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[3] See United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016*, fig. 80.

[4] United Nations Children's Fund, "Monitoring and reporting mechanism: the crisis in South Sudan", briefing note (October 2015).

[5] As referenced in resolutions 2240 (2015) and 2295 (2016), respectively.

9. Ending slavery in conflict situations will contribute to intensifying efforts to combat terrorism by eradicating a source of income for violent extremists. There is a particular need to step up efforts to disrupt related transnational organized criminal networks that are engaged in people trafficking (including from, through and to conflict zones) or that seek to take advantage of instability in post-conflict situations to conduct illicit activities or corrupt the State in order to carry out such activities. There is an urgent need for an increased response to this issue through the Security Council and the wider United Nations system, one focused on the immediate and longer-term options for risk mitigation.

10. Strengthened cooperation within the United Nations, between countries and among a range of non-State actors, including the private sector, will be vital in disrupting and dismantling groups that seek to prey on the most vulnerable and use slavery as a means to undermine peace and security. This cooperation should rely on tools familiar to the Security Council, such as the robust and consistent use of the full range of existing mechanisms for anti-money-laundering, countering the financing of terrorism and applying sanctions, as well as those less familiar — including increased work with the private sector to prevent national economies from being contaminated by illicit funds linked to modern slavery and other forms of transnational organized crime.

Key questions

11. Key questions are:

(a) How can the Security Council better address the increasing use of trafficking, forced labour and modern slavery by armed groups, terrorist groups and transnational organized crime groups?

(b) How can the Security Council promote greater cooperation on law enforcement and economic sanctions to disband the criminal networks that prey on vulnerable people and create vulnerability in conflict situations?

(c) How can the particular vulnerabilities of refugees, displaced persons and marginalized groups be addressed through the work of the United Nations and its Member States?

(d) How can the United Nations system enhance its effectiveness and coordination against trafficking in persons, forced labour and modern slavery?

(e) How can we ensure that evidence is preserved so that investigations and prosecutions may take place? How can we ensure accountability of those who enslave, engage in trafficking in persons or utilize forced labour in conflict situations?

Format

12. The format of the meeting is an open ministerial debate of the Security Council, open to Member States of the United Nations, under the presidency of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Briefers

13. The briefers will be:

- The Secretary-General
- Kevin Hyland, Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner (United Kingdom)
- Ilwad Elman, from the Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre (Somalia)

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Seventy-first session
Agenda items 32, 37 and 39

Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Letter dated 7 March 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to you regarding the letter dated 12 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia addressed to the Secretary-General (A/71/749-S/2017/42).

The said letter not only failed to respond to our comments (see A/71/627-S/2016/986) with regard to the allegations made by Armenia in its written communication for the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" (A/71/91) but also provided yet another example of Armenia's falsifications and manifest disregard of international law.

The letter also left unaddressed the direct question as to why Armenia resorts to such allegations through a written communication for the report of the Secretary-General relating to Cuba, instead of tackling directly the issue of the so-called "blockade" where appropriate: in the General Assembly or the Security Council, given its "continuity".

The answer is very simple and clear. There is no hint of any blockade by Azerbaijan against Armenia.

As is well known, economic relations and land communication between our countries were interrupted because of Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan and the resulting military occupation of a significant part of my country's territory. The war waged by Armenia claimed the lives of tens of thousands of people, ruined cities and livelihoods and resulted in the forcible expulsion of more than 1 million

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Azerbaijanis from their homes and properties, while thousands of people went missing in connection with the conflict.

It should be particularly noted that, since the very first day of the conflict, combat operations have been conducted exclusively inside the territory of Azerbaijan, almost in the middle of the country, affecting its civilian population and infrastructure.

The war also has had a serious negative economic and humanitarian impact on the Nakhchyvan Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan, which is separated from the main part of the country by the territory of Armenia. The railroad communication between Baku and Nakhchyvan ceased its operations as a result of the attacks and robberies that passenger and cargo trains had been regularly subjected to since 1989 while passing through the territory of Armenia. Later, the Armenian section of the railway route connecting Azerbaijan with its Nakhchyvan Autonomous Republic was destroyed and dismantled.

It is no coincidence that, besides mere assertion, the aforementioned letter failed to provide a single piece of evidence of the existence of any successful example of "developing economic linkages and building confidence between conflicting parties", of which one is an aggressor and the other is the object of the aggression. It would be nonsense for a country whose territory is under military occupation, whose hundreds of thousands of citizens were subjected to atrocious crimes and notorious ethnic cleansing, to provide the aggressor access to its territory and engage with it in any economic relations.

In its resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993), the Security Council acknowledged the fact that acts of military force were committed against Azerbaijan; that such acts are unlawful and incompatible with the prohibition of the use of armed force in international relations and in contradiction with the Charter of the United Nations and its purposes; and that they constitute an obvious violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, specifically as pertains to Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter.

In those resolutions, the Security Council never qualified interruptions of economic or other relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan as a blockade or a unilateral coercive measure, as the Armenian side tries to assert, and clearly made the removal of all obstacles to communications and transportation conditional upon the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian occupying forces from the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.[1]

Most importantly, in the context of specific determinations made by the Security Council, Armenia's actions should be seen as a serious breach of obligations under peremptory norms (*jus cogens*) of general international law, which gives rise to duties of States to cooperate in order to bring such a breach to an end by lawful means and not to recognize as lawful a situation created by it, nor render aid or assistance in maintaining that situation.

The General Assembly, in its resolution 62/243, entitled "The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan", reaffirmed that "no State shall recognize as lawful the situation resulting from the occupation of the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan, nor render aid or assistance in maintaining this situation".

[1] See Security Council resolutions 853 (1993), paras. 3-5, and 874 (1993), para. 5.

As the International Law Commission recognized in article 54 of the articles on State responsibility, which were commended to States by General Assembly resolution 56/83 of 12 December 2001, any State has the right to take lawful measures against the responsible State to ensure cessation of the breach and reparation in the interests of the injured State or of the beneficiaries of the obligation breached.

Based on the principle of non-recognition, not only Azerbaijan but also a number of other States Members of the United Nations, in their efforts to limit the consequences of gross violations of international law by Armenia, refrain from either establishing diplomatic or consular relations with Armenia or minimizing them, as well as from entering into economic and trade cooperation with it.

In its resolution 10/43-POL of 19 October 2016, entitled "Aggression of the Republic of Armenia against the Republic of Azerbaijan", the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation called upon member States, as well as other members of the international community, "to use such effective political and economic measures, as required, in order to put an end to Armenian aggression and occupation of the Azerbaijani territories, including, inter alia, through refraining from economic activities in and investments to the Republic of Armenia, as well as through limiting overall cooperation with the Republic of Armenia".

Armenia's attempts to speculate on a sensitive domain of human rights are fundamentally flawed and beneath all criticism. It is irrefutable that Armenia cannot demand privileges at the very core of which are gross and systematic violations of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, and the discriminatory denial of fundamental rights and freedoms with respect to the significantly larger Azerbaijani population expelled from, and denied access to, their homes and properties in both Armenia and the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

The problems Armenia is facing in the socioeconomic sphere, such as the significant drop in major segments of its economy in recent years and high migration from the country of its citizens in search of a better life, are caused mostly by the policy of aggression, hatred and animosity pursued by the leadership of Armenia. This policy totally does a disservice to the genuine interests, aspirations and well-being of the Armenian people, which can be ensured only through good-neighbourly relations.

Peace, security and stability are achievable, first and foremost, only if the consequences of Armenia's aggression and occupation are removed, thereby ensuring that its armed forces are immediately, unconditionally and completely withdrawn from the territories of Azerbaijan, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country are restored and the right of internally displaced Azerbaijanis to return to their homes is guaranteed and implemented.

The earlier the leadership of Armenia realizes the lack of any prospect of its dangerous political agenda, the sooner peace and security will be restored.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 32, 37 and 39, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yashar **Aliyev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2017/200

Security Council

Distr.: General
8 March 2017

Original: English

Letter dated 8 March 2017 from the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission addressed to the President of the Security Council

On behalf of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and in view of the discussions on Burundi to be held in the Security Council on 9 March 2017, I transmit herewith a report on the Commission's ongoing engagement in Burundi.

I should be grateful if this letter and its annex could be circulated to the members of the Security Council and also be issued as a document of the Council.

I remain committed to cooperation between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission on Burundi.

(*Signed*) Jürg **Lauber**
Chair of the Burundi configuration
Peacebuilding Commission

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Annex to the letter dated 8 March 2017 from the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission addressed to the President of the Security Council

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on the situation in Burundi

In view of the Security Council consultations on Burundi to be held on 9 March 2017, I would like to report on my ongoing engagement as Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

1. Activities of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission since the last oral briefing to the Security Council, on 18 March 2016

From 4 to 9 July 2016, I travelled to Burundi and Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, in order to pursue the dialogue with the Government and key stakeholders as well as with the East African Community facilitator of the Inter-Burundi Dialogue and former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Benjamin Mkapa.

On 7 and 8 November 2016, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Burundi, Paolo Lembo, and I convened the main multilateral partners of Burundi for socioeconomic consultations on Burundi in Geneva. The World Bank, the African Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the European Union and several representatives of the United Nations country team participated in these consultations.

My overall approach to peacebuilding has remained holistic, that is, pertaining to all three pillars of the mandate of the United Nations. In 2016, I held six meetings of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and briefed the Security Council on three occasions (once orally and twice in writing).

2. Assessment of the current situation in Burundi

At their most recent meetings, members of the configuration heard reports by various United Nations entities, all of which underscored that the situation in Burundi requires sustained attention and support from international partners, for example:

- Reports of human rights monitoring mechanisms concerning the situation of public security and human rights, including with regard to acts of violence and violations of human rights, as well as pressure on civil society organizations and human rights defenders.
- Reports of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Conflict Prevention, including in Burundi, Jamal Benomar, on the ongoing political impasse, including the lack of confidence between the Government and the opposition and the situation of the media, as well as on national, regional and international efforts to find a political settlement of the crisis.
- Reports of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations country team on the deteriorating socioeconomic situation.

Regarding the socioeconomic situation, the consultations which took place in Geneva on 7 and 8 November 2016 were particularly insightful:

- The country's five participating partners shared the view that Burundi is currently experiencing severe macroeconomic difficulties, which were

reflected in negative growth in growth domestic product in 2015 and 2016. Food insecurity affects a much larger area of Burundi than in 2015, and consumer prices are on the rise.

- They identified food security and agriculture, health and education as the sectors which are most seriously affected by the current situation.

- Besides these sectors, the need for broader macroeconomic engagement in Burundi was emphasized in Geneva, since decreasing fiscal revenues (partly related to decreased investments and direct budgetary support) are putting the national budget under pressure.

- In view of these economic indicators, the partners of Burundi showed continued readiness to address the needs of the population and to prevent a further deterioration of the situation.

While recognizing the importance of the contribution of Burundi in African Union and United Nations peacekeeping operations, members of the configuration expressed concerns about the signals of disengagement sent by the Government of Burundi to its regional and international partners, for instance by suspending its cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

We welcome the fact that, on 24 February 2017, the Government of Burundi transmitted to OHCHR in Geneva a draft agreement between the Republic of Burundi and the United Nations concerning the establishment of an office of OHCHR in Burundi.

However, I am personally afraid that, faced with the current situation, the international partners may decide to disengage from the Government and the people of Burundi.

3. Ideas on the way forward for sustained efforts in peacebuilding

Peacebuilding in Burundi requires a long-term vision and sustained efforts. Abandoning Burundi now would mean wasting past efforts and putting the country and its people at risk of recurring conflict.

While the primary responsibility for the well-being of the Burundian people lies with the Government of Burundi, the international partners must maintain their support for current efforts aimed at reaching a peaceful settlement of the crisis in Burundi.

I would therefore like to invite the regional and international partners of Burundi, in particular the relevant parts of the United Nations system, to maintain and where possible step up their support in the areas of peace and security, human rights, political reconciliation and institution-building, as well as with regard to humanitarian aid, socioeconomic development and the preparation for credible, peaceful and democratic elections in 2020.

At the same time, I invite the Government of Burundi to recognize its partners' goodwill and facilitate the efforts of the East African Community, the African Union and the United Nations to engage with Burundi in order to advance the Inter-Burundi Dialogue, and to strengthen cooperation with both the African Union and the United Nations.

I welcome any efforts for reconciliation within Burundi as well as ongoing dialogue inside and outside the country. I also welcome the efforts of the East African Community facilitator of the Inter-Burundi Dialogue and wish to reassure him of the configuration's continued support for his work. I am convinced that it

would be of great benefit for Member States if the facilitator could at some point brief the Security Council and the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission on the developments in the Inter-Burundi Dialogue.

4. Ongoing and planned activities of the configuration

I plan to travel to Burundi from 27 to 31 March 2017 in order:

- To gain a first-hand impression of the situation on the ground
- To meet with the Government, opposition and civil society
- To pursue the socioeconomic dialogue
- To brief the Government on my ongoing conversations with the partners of Burundi

I see the continuation of the socioeconomic dialogue not only as an opportunity to address socioeconomic challenges but also as a means to increase confidence between the Government and its international partners.

After my next visit to Burundi, I will continue working with the members of the configuration, including the Government of Burundi, and with the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office, on a variety of peacebuilding activities with a view to supporting the country's path towards sustainable peace. The activities of the configuration will remain in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and will continue to be discussed with relevant international, regional and subregional partners, in particular the facilitator of the East African Community-led process.

I will keep the Security Council informed about my visit to Burundi and my planned engagement, in accordance with established practice.

United Nations S/2017/201

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Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)

Reporting period from 5 November 2016 to 28 February 2017

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) since my predecessor's report of 4 November 2016 (S/2016/931).

2. My Special Coordinator for Lebanon continued to provide the good offices of the United Nations, in coordination with the International Support Group for Lebanon, to support the efforts of Lebanon to address its security and stability challenges. The situation in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) remained generally calm. Both parties remain committed to resolution 1701 (2006). The parties did not, however, use the prevailing calm to effect progress on their outstanding obligations under the resolution and towards a permanent ceasefire.

3. In a welcome political achievement, on 18 December 2016, Prime Minister Saad Hariri formed a new Government, which was endorsed by Parliament on 28 December 2016. As Parliament's term is due to end on 20 June 2017, it is important that preparations for new elections, in accordance with the electoral calendar, continue in conformity with the country's constitution and its democratic practice.

4. Lebanon's stability and security also remain contingent on developments in the neighbouring Syrian Arab Republic. The Lebanese Armed Forces continued to play a vital role in maintaining security on the border with the Syrian Arab Republic and throughout Lebanon, including in countering threats from terrorist extremist groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the Nusrah Front.

5. As of 31 December 2016, the number of Syrian refugees registered with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) stood at 1,011,366. Both President Michel Aoun and Prime Minister Hariri have repeatedly highlighted the need for the international community to provide greater assistance in this regard.

6. The situation in the Palestine refugee camps remained generally calm, with the exception of Ein El Helweh camp, where serious clashes between extremist militants and Fatah members resulted in a number of fatalities and disruptions of

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essential services of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The construction of a security perimeter around the Ein El Helweh camp, initiated by the Lebanese Armed Forces, in 2014, resumed in late October 2016, but was subsequently suspended.

II. Implementation of resolution 1701 (2006)

A. Situation in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

7. The environment in the UNIFIL area of operations was generally stable, with relatively few ground violations of the Blue Line. Nevertheless, tensions mounted when the Israeli Defense Forces removed a soil barrier on 19 January 2017, east of United Nations position 9-63, near El Adeisse (Sector East). This barrier had been placed by Lebanese municipal workers south of the Blue Line in March 2016 (see S/2016/572, para. 10). Also on 19 January, civilians, municipal police and, subsequently, personnel of the Lebanese Armed Forces arrived at the location while Israeli Defense Forces personnel observed the area from south of the Blue Line. Several journalists were also present. When a standoff ensued between the Lebanese Armed Forces and Israeli Defense Forces soldiers, with both sides aiming weapons at each other, UNIFIL deployed along the Blue Line to prevent further escalation of the situation. Later that day, when the situation had calmed down and most personnel of the Lebanese Armed Forces had left, Lebanese municipal workers, against UNIFIL advice, rebuilt a soil barrier south of the Blue Line. The situation has since remained quiet.

8. UNIFIL frequently observed groups of Lebanese civilians, carrying cameras, walking along the Blue Line, violating it on occasion, primarily in the Houla and Blida areas (Sector East). On 8 November 2016, an excavator deployed by the Israeli Defense Forces to carry out vegetation clearance violated the Blue Line in the Alma Ash Shaab (Sector West) area. Lebanese shepherds with their flocks continued to cross the Blue Line, mainly in Bastrah and Shab'a Farms areas (Sector East), despite warnings by UNIFIL personnel. On two occasions, the Israeli Defense Forces detained shepherds who, it said, had crossed the Blue Line. In the first instance, on 9 November 2016, a shepherd was detained briefly and returned north of the Blue Line in the vicinity of Kafer Chouba (Sector East). In the second case, on 6 January 2017, the Israeli Defense Forces detained a shepherd in the area south of Ayta ash-Shab area (Sector West). UNIFIL facilitated his return to Lebanon through the Ras Naqoura crossing several hours later. A UNIFIL investigation into the incident is ongoing. There was a notable increase in Blue Line violations in the area of Blida (Sector East), where Lebanese civilians, occasionally in groups, frequented a well, located just south of the Blue Line, which the municipality had cleaned in November 2016. On 25 and 27 November 2016 and on 13 December 2016, soldiers of the Lebanese Armed Forces violated the Blue Line at the location of the same well.

9. UNIFIL's freedom of movement was largely respected. On a few isolated occasions, UNIFIL troops were subject to aggressive behaviour and obstruction of movement. In the most serious incident, on 3 February 2017, a group of civilians blocked a UNIFIL patrol near Majdal Zun (Sector West) with a van and motorcycle, and hit UNIFIL armoured vehicles with iron bars and wooden poles, while some climbed onto the vehicle and attempted to reach for the gunner. As the UNIFIL vehicles moved out of the location, after pushing aside the vehicular roadblock, they were followed and subjected to stone-throwing in Majdal Zun before the patrol made a safe exit from the area by once again pushing aside civilian vehicles used as

roadblocks. The civilians continued to follow the UNIFIL patrol and, while passing through the neighbouring village of Al Mansuri, the group turned its aggression on another UNIFIL patrol in the area, hitting the armoured vehicles with stones and bars, while one civilian in a car pointed a pistol at the UNIFIL patrol. All UNIFIL personnel safely evacuated from the location without injuries, although the patrol vehicles were severely damaged. The UNIFIL investigation into the incident is ongoing.

10. Other incidents included two cases of stone-throwing, the seizure of a UNIFIL map and the breaking of the mirrors of a UNIFIL vehicle. On 22 December 2016, UNIFIL peacekeepers, seeking to mitigate tensions between Lebanese civilians and Israeli Defense Forces soldiers at the Blue Line in the vicinity of Marun al-Ra's (Sector West) encountered aggressive behaviour by Lebanese civilians, who took a mobile phone from a UNIFIL peacekeeper, which they handed over to intelligence branch personnel of the Lebanese Armed Forces. The phone was later returned. In two separate incidents at El Adeisse, local civilians behaved in an unfriendly manner towards UNIFIL peacekeepers, on one occasion trying to place a Hizbullah flag on a UNIFIL armoured personnel carrier, and in the other case driving aggressively close to UNIFIL vehicles. In a few instances, Lebanese civilians walking in the vicinity of the Blue Line demonstrated an unfriendly posture towards unarmed military observers of Observer Group Lebanon and tried to obstruct their movement. In all incidents, UNIFIL engaged with the Lebanese Armed Forces to defuse tensions and ensure that UNIFIL's freedom of movement was respected.

11. UNIFIL continued to observe civilians, mostly engaged in hunting activities, carrying unauthorized weapons in the area of operations. Sightings of armed hunters increased, particularly in the areas of Meiss Ej Jebel and Blida, despite a Lebanese ban on hunting. On 16 February, the Lebanese Armed Forces issued a statement reminding citizens that hunting is prohibited. On three occasions, UNIFIL observed individuals carrying assault rifles; in one instance, four men on two scooters fired in the air with an assault rifle and two hunting rifles while passing a United Nations position near Dayr Kifa (Sector East). UNIFIL observed, on several occasions, the presence or firing of small arms, including during weddings and funerals. In all cases, UNIFIL informed the Lebanese Armed Forces of the violations.

12. In a reported firing incident across the Blue Line on 26 October 2016 in the Kafer Kela area, one soldier of the Israeli Defense Forces was lightly wounded by a ricochet bullet near the technical fence. The Israeli Defense Forces stated that the soldier had been shot at from a car driving along the road north of the Blue Line. Israeli Defense Forces soldiers responded by firing shots at the suspected vehicle. UNIFIL did not observe the incident. The Mission engaged immediately with the Israeli Defense Forces and the Lebanese Armed Forces to prevent further escalation and to ensure calm. The UNIFIL investigation into the incident is ongoing.

13. The Israeli Defense Forces continued to allege that Hizbullah maintains military infrastructure and equipment in southern Lebanon. UNIFIL monitors the area of operations and the Blue Line and reports all violations of resolution 1701 (2006) that it observes, including the presence of unauthorized armed personnel or weapons. In accordance with its mandate, UNIFIL does not proactively search private property for weapons in the south unless there is credible evidence of a violation of resolution 1701 (2006), including an imminent threat of hostile activity from that location. Where specific information is received regarding the illegal presence of armed personnel, weapons or infrastructure inside its area of operations, UNIFIL, in cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces, remains determined to act with all means available within its mandate and capabilities. To date, UNIFIL has neither been provided with, nor found, evidence of an unauthorized transfer of arms into its area of operations. The Lebanese Armed Forces command continued to

confirm that it would act immediately to put a stop to any illegal activity in contravention of resolution 1701 (2006) and relevant Government decisions.

14. Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace continued on an almost daily basis, mostly with unmanned aerial vehicles, but also with fixed-wing aircraft, including fighter jets, in violation of resolution 1701 (2006) and of Lebanese sovereignty. On 16 January 2017, the Israeli Defense Forces informed UNIFIL that one of their unmanned aerial vehicles had crashed on Lebanese territory south of Alma Ash Shaab (Sector West) in the vicinity of the Blue Line. UNIFIL informed the Lebanese Armed Forces, which conducted a search operation in the area. Lebanese media reported at the time that Hizbullah had found and taken possession of the remnants of the unmanned aerial vehicle. The Lebanese Armed Forces subsequently informed UNIFIL that nothing was found and that the Lebanese Armed Forces had no independent information of a crash. UNIFIL protested all air violations to the Israeli Defense Forces and called upon the Government of Israel to stop them immediately. The Government of Lebanon also protested the air violations to UNIFIL.

15. The Israeli occupation of northern Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line continued in violation of resolution 1701 (2006) and of Lebanese sovereignty. To date, Israel has not provided a response to the proposal submitted by UNIFIL to both parties in 2011 aimed at facilitating the withdrawal of the Israeli Defense Forces from the occupied area. The Lebanese Armed Forces informed UNIFIL, in July 2011, of Lebanon's agreement to the proposal.

16. Relations between UNIFIL and the local population remained largely positive. The Head of Mission and Force Commander continued to meet local authorities and religious leaders, while the Mission's military and civilian personnel conducted regular and frequent meetings with community representatives in the area of operations, underlining the importance of cooperation between United Nations peacekeepers and host communities in maintaining the existing calm while working together for sustainable peace.

17. The Mission, working with Government institutions as well as with United Nations and other partner agencies, continued to support the extension of State authority in the area of operations and to address the needs of the local population, including through quick-impact projects focused on urgent social and economic needs, such as waste management and the empowerment of women. In the context of supporting community resilience and enhancing local capacities for protecting civilians, UNIFIL also continued regular training courses for municipal police and civil defence volunteers in fire-fighting tactics and rescue missions. UNIFIL contingents continued to provide medical, dental and veterinary assistance to communities.

18. The Lebanese Armed Forces remained deployed with two reduced-strength brigades in the area south of the Litani River. In the light of the tense security situation along the border with the Syrian Arab Republic, the Lebanese Armed Forces maintained a reinforced presence in the north-eastern part of the UNIFIL area of operations (Shab'a village and the Arqub area).

19. UNIFIL conducted an average of over 13,600 operational activities per month in the area of operations, including vehicle and foot patrols, checkpoints and observation tasks. UNIFIL continued to perform approximately 10 per cent of its total operational activities in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces. The percentage increased to about 16 per cent when taking into account only those operational activities that UNIFIL could conduct jointly with the Lebanese Armed Forces. Foot patrols ("market walks"), conducted jointly by the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL in villages and urban areas, provided additional opportunities for regular direct contact with the local population.

20. As part of its periodic risk and threat assessment reviews, UNIFIL identified no imminent threat of physical violence against civilians during the reporting period. UNIFIL continued its Mission-wide planning efforts and training for the protection of civilians. UNIFIL conducted several exercises to enhance Mission preparedness, while also taking into account the role of humanitarian actors.

21. The UNIFIL Maritime Task Force continued to carry out maritime interdiction operations and training for the Lebanese Armed Forces Navy. During the reporting period, the Maritime Task Force hailed 1,643 ships, 333 of which the Lebanese authorities inspected and cleared. Training focused on Lebanese Armed Forces Navy personnel who command such maritime interdiction operations. On land and at sea, UNIFIL conducted joint and coordinated exercises, lectures and training courses with the Lebanese Armed Forces to enhance operational capabilities and effectiveness, including on the use of coastal radar, boarding and medical support.

22. The Maritime Task Force maintained a visible presence in the southern part of the area of maritime operations to prevent tensions between Israel and Lebanon. The Maritime Task Force does not have a mandate to monitor the line of buoys installed unilaterally by Israel and recognized neither by the Government of Lebanon nor the United Nations. The Israeli Defense Forces continued to carry out maintenance activities at the buoys, at times with divers. On several occasions, Israeli Defense Forces patrol boats south of the line of buoys fired machine gun rounds or flares and dropped explosive charges to turn away Lebanese fishing boats.

B. Security and liaison arrangements

23. The UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander maintained frequent and regular bilateral contacts with Lebanese and Israeli authorities and facilitated three tripartite meetings with delegations from both sides, which aimed to bolster the prevailing calm and stability and prevent incidents between the parties resulting from misunderstandings or actions by individuals. The parties consistently expressed their commitment to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), to respect the Blue Line and to maintain stability along and across it. Both sides stated to UNIFIL their keen interest in not letting regional developments destabilize the situation in southern Lebanon and northern Israel.

24. When tensions arose in areas close to the Blue Line, UNIFIL used the open channels established with both sides, combined with a proactive deployment of its liaison component, military observers and units on the ground, to help prevent violations of the Blue Line, mitigate misunderstandings and misperception of actions and build trust and confidence between the parties. This proved to be particularly effective in sensitive areas such as Blida, where the annual olive harvest in Lebanese-owned fields straddling the Blue Line took place without incident.

25. The meetings of the tripartite forum continued to see active and constructive engagement by the parties in discussing violations of resolution 1701 (2006), including ground violations of the Blue Line, Israeli air violations and the continued occupation of northern Ghajar by Israel, as well as actions and activities considered provocative by the other side. The Israeli Defense Forces expressed concern about what they considered reconnaissance activities by individuals or groups of men, at times carrying weapons, moving on foot or in vehicles in close proximity to the Blue Line, at times violating it and on some occasions attempting to intimidate UNIFIL personnel observing their activities. The Lebanese Armed Forces objected to what they considered extensive and intrusive observation by the Israeli Defense Forces into Lebanese territory from fixed assets along the Blue Line, as well as from the air covering the length of Lebanese territory.

26. The visible marking of the Blue Line on the ground continued in 12 locations where UNIFIL teams demined access lanes and constructed markers. During the reporting period, 6 markers were completed, 15 markers remained under construction, while numerous older markers were refurbished. Currently, 46 points are being measured and 17 are in the process of verification by the parties. The total figure for Blue Line work progress, as at 9 February 2017, was 326 demined, 278 measured, 263 constructed, 246 verified and, since start of the refurbishment project in February 2016, 215 refurbished.

27. The establishment of a UNIFIL liaison office in Tel Aviv remains pending.

28. The Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL maintained continuous engagement through the strategic dialogue process, which forms an integral part of the Lebanese Armed Forces capability-development plan, and continued to promote international assistance for the benefit of the Lebanese Armed Forces deployed in the UNIFIL area of operations. Together with the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, UNIFIL participated in the Lebanese Armed Forces Executive Military Commission and conducted regular consultations with donor representatives to promote international assistance and facilitate resource mobilization for the Lebanese Armed Forces in support of its responsibilities under resolution 1701 (2006).

29. As mandated by the Security Council in its resolution 2305 (2016), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is finalizing, on my behalf, a strategic review of UNIFIL, as a follow-up and update to the 2012 strategic review, in order to examine the structure of the Mission's uniformed and civilian components and related resources with a view to ensuring that the Mission is configured most appropriately to fulfil its mandated tasks. A multi-disciplinary team led by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. El-Ghassim Wane, visited UNIFIL, Beirut and Tel Aviv from 15 to 22 January 2017. I will communicate the final conclusions and recommendations of the strategic review to the Security Council in early March.

C. Disarming armed groups

30. The maintenance of arms by Hizbullah and other groups outside the control of the State continued to restrict Lebanon's ability to exercise its full sovereignty and authority over its territory. The ministerial statement of the Council of Ministers of 28 December 2016 addressed the need for a national defence strategy through dialogue, but no meetings of the national dialogue were held during the reporting period.

31. On 6 December 2016, the Israeli Defense Forces published a document purporting to be a declassified map of the Hizbullah military infrastructure in Lebanon on social media, in which it asserted that Hizbullah was "hiding behind Lebanon's civilians" and qualified this as "a war crime". On 8 December 2016, an Israeli Defense Forces spokesperson clarified that the map was illustrative in nature, while maintaining that Hizbullah kept military assets amongst the civilian population.

32. On 11 February 2017, in an interview with Egyptian media, President Aoun stated, in response to a question about Hizbullah and its weapons, that there was a "need for its presence to complement the role of the army" and that it was "an essential part of defending Lebanon." On 13 February 2017, in another media engagement, the President stated that the issue of Hizbullah's weapons was subject to the national defence strategy, while reiterating that Lebanon had to "use special means for fighting, in which regular and popular forces take part" since it was

"unable to assemble a military force capable of confronting those forces" hostile to Lebanon. This was followed by a statement on 14 February by Prime Minister Hariri on the occasion of the commemoration of the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, in which he noted a sharp disagreement about Hizbullah's weapons, and stated that what protected the country was that there was a consensus on the army, the legitimate forces and the State, and only the State.

33. In a televised statement on 16 February 2017, the Secretary-General of Hizbullah, Hassan Nasrallah, indicated that his organization had something that could change the course of any war, and he reiterated previous warnings that Hizbullah could reach Israeli gas storage and nuclear installations. Prime Minister Hariri's opening remarks to the meeting of the Council of Ministers on 17 February, according to a press release from his office, stressed that protecting Lebanon and the Lebanese from the external risks also comes from the policy adopted by the President of the Republic and the Government, based on the respect of international conventions and resolutions, especially resolution 1701 (2006).

34. The Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations, in identical letters addressed to the President of the Security Council and to me on 13 and 17 February 2017 (S/2017/133 and S/2017/148, respectively), reacted to the above-mentioned statements by President Aoun and the Secretary-General of Hizbullah, underscoring the need to condemn the latter's "dangerous and aggressive statement". In his letter dated 23 February 2017, the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations denounced threats by senior Israeli officials to destroy Lebanon.

35. The United Nations has recalled Lebanon's obligations under resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006), noting that adherence continues to be of vital importance to Lebanon's stability and security.

36. Since 1 November 2016, coordinated efforts by the Lebanese Armed Forces and security services have resulted in the arrest of a high number of individuals suspected of affiliation with extremist groups or involvement in terrorist activities throughout Lebanon. Arrests have included the dismantling of a terror cell in Tripoli, on 30 December 2016, which was reportedly planning attacks during the holiday season, the arrest on 10 January 2017 of an ISIL affiliate reportedly gathering intelligence for an attack in downtown Beirut, and the arrest on 21 January 2017 of an ISIL-affiliated Lebanese would-be suicide bomber in a coffee shop in Beirut.

37. Violence also targeted members of the Lebanese Armed Forces and security forces. On 5 December 2016, a soldier of the Lebanese Armed Forces was killed in an attack on a Lebanese Armed Forces position in Biqa' Safrin, allegedly by ISIL affiliates. Later that month, a member of the security forces was shot dead in Choueifat, south-east of Beirut, and a member of the Lebanese State security forces was wounded in the area of Akkar.

38. There was no progress in the dismantling of the military bases maintained by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada, contrary to the 2006 decision of the national dialogue. The bases continue to compromise Lebanese sovereignty and impede the ability of the State to effectively monitor and control parts of its territory.

39. The situation in the Palestine refugee camp of Ein El Helweh remained unsettled. Violent clashes took place among factions and in the context of operations by the Joint Palestinian security forces, in coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, against extremist groups operating out of the camp. Individuals suspected of association with armed groups continued to surrender to the Lebanese authorities.

At least 15 of the 17 fatalities recorded during the reporting period in Palestine refugee camps occurred in Ein El Helweh, with two other fatalities reported in the Mieh Mieh camp. On 29 January 2017, an attempt to assassinate a security official at the embassy of Palestine in Sidon, adjacent to the Ein El Helweh camp, was reported. On 18 February 2017, the Joint Palestinian security forces were formally dissolved, following internal disagreements. The security situation subsequently deteriorated due to armed clashes between Fatah and extremist groups, which resulted in five fatalities and several injuries, displacement, damage to infrastructure and limits on freedom of movement. UNRWA services in the camp were temporarily suspended. Following the breakdown of a first ceasefire agreement on 26 February, a second ceasefire on 28 February included the restoration of a joint security arrangement, as well as the handing over to the authorities of 138 fugitives.

40. During the reporting period, the Lebanese Armed Forces resumed the construction of a security perimeter and a series of watchtowers around Ein El Helweh, a process initiated in 2014. Following demonstrations by Palestinian camp residents, and as a result of proposals for alternative security measures by Palestinian factions, the construction works were suspended.

41. The Government of Lebanon, with the support of the United Nations, continued to advance the development of Lebanon's national strategy for the prevention of violent extremism, in line with the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism presented by the Secretary-General in 2016. The national strategy on the prevention of violent extremism is regarded as an independent but integral component of the Government's overall approach to reinforcing the country's stability and security. The ministerial statement of the Government of Prime Minister Hariri also includes a reference to the need to develop a national counter-terrorism strategy.

D. Arms embargo and border control

42. With regard to the concerns of ongoing arms transfers to Hizbullah, the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations, in his identical letters of 21 November 2016 addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2016/987), reiterated the view of Israel that Hizbullah had been carrying out a massive military build-up in Lebanon. The Permanent Representative stated that Hizbullah had amassed more than 120,000 rockets and missiles, many of which had the range to target any city in Israel, and had stationed them amid the civilian population in southern Lebanon. The Permanent Representative also advised of the alleged use of commercial flights from the Islamic Republic of Iran to Beirut and to Damascus for the onward transfer of arms and related materiel to Hizbullah, with the goal of enhancing its arsenal.

43. On 24 November 2016, the Chairman of the Beirut international airport issued a statement strongly refuting reports regarding such use of the airport. In identical letters dated 25 January 2017 addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (A/71/770-S/2017/80), the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations stated that the letter of the Permanent Representative of Israel contained "fabrications and false claims". The Permanent Representative of Lebanon also conveyed a statement by the Lebanese Ministry of Defence to the effect that it was "fully committed to implementing Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), especially with respect to the prohibition on the entry or smuggling of weapons to any party whatsoever through Lebanese State facilities". In identical letters dated 22 November 2016 addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2016/992), the chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations asserted

that the claims were baseless and represented unsubstantiated accusations. The United Nations takes all allegations seriously but is not in a position to verify them independently.

44. Hizbullah remained openly engaged in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. On 13 November 2016, reports on social media appeared about a Hizbullah military parade near Qusayr in the Syrian Arab Republic, close to the Lebanese border, depicting large numbers of fighters, vehicles and equipment. In a speech on 23 December, Secretary-General Nasrallah acknowledged Hizbullah's participation in the battle for Aleppo and praised its outcome as a big military, political and moral development for their front. On 12 February 2017, Mr. Nasrallah again referenced Hizbullah's presence in the field in the Syrian Arab Republic and on 16 February acknowledged losses of martyrs in the field on the front lines and in bloody battles. A number of Lebanese nationals were also reported to be fighting with anti-Government armed groups in the Syrian Arab Republic.

45. Recorded incidents of cross-border fire from the Syrian Arab Republic into Lebanon have decreased even further. However, the situation a'ong the border remained tense, requiring continuous operations by Lebanese Armed Forces against militant threats. Arsal remained a flashpoint. On 25 November 2016, Lebanese Armed Forces conducted a major operation there, arresting a commander and 10 militants affiliated with ISIL, reportedly linked to the bombing attack in Al-Qa'ah of 27 June 2016. Hizbullah also continued to engage in fighting ISIL and the Nusrah Front in the border area. Four ISIL operatives were killed under unclear circumstances in separate incidents on 14 November 2016, 23 January 2017 and 7 and 15 February. Fighting also continued between ISIL and the Nusrah Front. Two individuals were reported shot and wounded, one on 28 November 2016 by ISIL and the other on 13 January 2017 by unknown assailants. Alleged weapons suppliers for militants on the outskirts of Arsal were arrested on at least three occasions in the border area. Efforts to secure the release of the nine servicemen that remain in ISIL captivity continued.

46. In the Biqa', on 9 November 2016, Lebanese Armed Forces foiled a cross-border infiltration attempt. In the border town of Majdal Anjar, on 30 November, Lebanese Armed Forces arrested an individual suspected of supplying weapons and of links to the 2014 bombing attacks in the Biqa' and southern Beirut. On 18 January 2017, Lebanese Armed Forces reportedly closed a number of illegal border crossings in the northern Biqa' by removing makeshift bridges.

47. The security plans of the Lebanese Armed Forces for Tripoli, the Biqa' and southern Beirut remain in place, but sporadic incidents nevertheless occurred. On 9 November 2016, Sheikh Bassam Tarras, charged in relation to the Zahlah bombing of 31 August, was released from prison on bail; on 31 January 2017, the Internal Security Forces arrested another suspect in the case. On 9 December 2016, heavy weaponry was reportedly used in clashes in Beirut's southern suburb. On 28 December, an improvised explosive device targeting a passenger bus killed one and critically injured another in al-Ain in the Biqa'.

48. International support to the Lebanese Armed Forces, with a view to strengthening its border capacity and completing the deployment of land border regiments and watchtowers, continued. On 29 November 2016, members of the Executive Military Commission, a coordination mechanism established pursuant to a call by the International Support Group for Lebanon, met to further coordinate efforts in support of the capability development plan of the Lebanese Armed Forces.

E. Landmines and cluster bombs

49. Five manual mine-clearance teams, one explosive ordnance disposal team and one mechanical mine-clearance team continued to be deployed in the UNIFIL area of operations to reduce the threat of landmines and other explosive remnants of war. UNIFIL demining teams cleared 93 m^2 of land and destroyed six anti-personnel mines to allow access to points to be marked on the Blue Line. Furthermore, the United Nations Mine Action Service conducted 10 quality assurance visits and 16 safety monitoring visits to UNIFIL demining teams, along with 2 landmine/explosive remnants of war safety training sessions and 1 explosive ordnance awareness briefing to United Nations personnel.

F. Delineation of borders

50. No progress was made towards the delineation or demarcation of the Lebanese-Syrian border during the reporting period, including in areas where it is uncertain or disputed. That step is necessary to enable the Government of Lebanon to extend its authority throughout all Lebanese territory, and for the Lebanese Armed Forces and security forces to secure the borders and prevent the transfer of arms or related materiel. There was no progress on the issue of the Shab'a Farms. Responses from Israel or the Syrian Arab Republic are still outstanding with regard to the provisional definition of the Shab'a Farms area as proposed in my report of 30 October 2007 on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2007/641).

G. Political and institutional stability

51. The swift formation of the new Government on 18 December 2016 was an important sign of the reactivation of political institutions in Lebanon. Following the appointment of Prime Minister Hariri, the International Support Group met separately with both President Aoun and Prime Minister Hariri to reiterate a number of guiding principles in the partnership between the international community and Lebanon. Since the parliamentary vote of confidence in the Government and its ministerial statement on 28 December, the Cabinet has met regularly and passed a number of important decrees.

52. The Security Council has repeatedly stressed the critical importance of electing a new Parliament before its current term expires on 20 June 2017, in accordance with the Constitution, as that will be crucial to the stability of Lebanon and its resilience in withstanding regional challenges. Discussions continue on the appropriate law for the legislative elections. Reaffirming its commitment to the stability and security of Lebanon, the Beirut-based International Support Group, on 22 February, encouraged all parties to arrive at an early compromise and underlined that the timely conduct of peaceful and transparent parliamentary elections was an important step to preserve the democratic tradition of Lebanon and to meet the aspirations of the Lebanese people.

53. The ministerial statement of Prime Minister Hariri's Government contained important undertakings regarding peace, stability and security in Lebanon. It reaffirmed that the Government respected all international instruments, was committed to Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) and would continue to support United Nations forces in Lebanon. Prime Minister Hariri reiterated his Government's strong commitment to resolution 1701 (2006) in a letter to me on 2 January, as well as in regular interaction with my Special Coordinator. In my response letter to Prime Minister Hariri, I stressed that the provisions of resolution

1701 (2006), together with other key Security Council resolutions and the long-standing policy of disassociation, remained essential for the stability of Lebanon and its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

54. The ministerial statement further underscored the need for Lebanon to be kept out of foreign conflicts in order to remain safe from the regional fire raging around it. It also committed to securing the requirements of the military and security services to fully carry out their duties to protect the State, the people and the land.

55. The ministerial statement emphasized several priorities that also define areas of cooperation between the Government of Lebanon and the United Nations, including effective governance, economic recovery, combating poverty and stamping out corruption. Prime Minister Hariri and members of his Cabinet have held a series of meetings with the United Nations in Lebanon to strengthen the long-standing partnership between the United Nations and Lebanon. The operationalization of the United Nations integrated strategic framework, based on the three pillars of peace and security, political stability and social and economic stabilization, has been a key priority since its adoption in October 2016.

56. There has been renewed diplomatic activity by the leadership of Lebanon and its partners. The visits by President Aoun to Saudi Arabia and Qatar in early January 2017 and to Egypt and Jordan in early February, as well as visits to Lebanon by several representatives of countries in the region, are examples of renewed constructive engagement in the interests of the country's stability and security.

57. During the reporting period, the Lebanese Cabinet approved several decrees to advance the exploitation of the country's maritime oil and gas resources. In a positive step towards ensuring accountability and good governance, Lebanon has since committed to applying the standards of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. The Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations, in a note verbale dated 2 February 2017, expressed its objection to non-consensual Lebanese economic activity in maritime areas belonging to Israel. It called upon the Government of Lebanon to refrain from advancing non-consensual activities in such areas, while reiterating its openness to dialogue and cooperation with relevant neighbouring States in accordance with the principles of international maritime law.

58. Since the establishment of its national human rights institution in October 2016, the Government of Lebanon has received nominations for members of the institution. A swift selection will allow the institution to commence its mandated work. The adoption of a code of conduct on human rights standards by the General Security Directorate is a further encouraging sign of the State's commitment to improve its compliance with standards and obligations in accordance with recommendations of the Committee against Torture and the universal periodic review.

59. Prime Minister Hariri and his Government have taken a number of measures to mitigate the impact of the Syrian conflict on Lebanon. That includes the appointment of a State Minister for displaced Syrians, tasked with the development of a national policy regarding Syrian displacement and the formation of an interministerial committee. That committee, led by the Prime Minister, would bring together the Ministers for the Interior, Social Affairs, Labour, Foreign Affairs, Education, Environment, Public Works, Economy and Trade and the Minister for displaced Syrians.

60. Syrian refugees in Lebanon remain reliant on international assistance for their survival. Some 71 per cent of Syrian refugees in Lebanon live below the poverty line. Many experience food insecurity and live in precarious housing conditions. Many of the Syrian refugees are forced to turn to negative coping mechanisms, such

as early marriage, begging or child labour. Some 30 per cent of Lebanese citizens also live below the poverty line, and around 10 per cent live in extreme poverty.

61. Donors continue to respond generously to support Lebanon in mitigating the impact of the Syrian conflict and to assist Syrian and Palestinian refugees in the country. In 2016, resources allocated to Lebanon reached $1.88 billion, with $1.54 billion disbursed or committed for that year, including $1.26 billion provided to United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations under the 2016 Lebanon Crisis Response Plan. At the launch of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan for 2017-2020 in Beirut on 19 January 2017, the Prime Minister appealed for continued support and stressed the need for longer-term development support to Lebanon, over and above humanitarian assistance. With regard to the follow-up to the London Conference on Syria in 2016, in particular the issue of a temporary waiver of the $200 residency fee for Syrian refugees, some tentative measures were announced with regard to certain categories of refugees. The Government continues to work with the United Nations towards an appropriate solution.

62. Palestinian refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic remain particularly vulnerable. At the end of December 2016, the number of Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA was around 32,000. A combination of poverty, limited access to employment and their precarious legal status would appear to be "push" factors to induce onward movement. An estimated 65 per cent of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon live in poverty, as do 90 per cent of Palestinian refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic, including 9 per cent who live in extreme poverty. Unemployment stands at 23 per cent among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and 53 per cent among Palestinian refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic.

III. Security and safety of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

63. UNIFIL continually reviewed its security plans and risk mitigation measures, particularly following security threat warnings, and closely coordinated them with the Lebanese authorities. Commemorative or celebratory shooting continued to pose a threat to both UNIFIL personnel and the local population in the UNIFIL area of operation.

64. UNIFIL conducted three security exercises during the reporting period aimed at strengthening security preparedness and testing contingency plans for emergency situations that might require the evacuation and/or relocation of UNIFIL civilian staff and eligible dependants.

65. UNIFIL continued to monitor ongoing proceedings at the Lebanese Military Court against individuals suspected of planning or perpetrating serious attacks against UNIFIL. With regard to the attack against UNIFIL peacekeepers serving with the Spanish contingent in 2007, a hearing at the Permanent Military Court planned for 3 February 2017 was rescheduled for procedural reasons to 29 May. In a case of terror intent, opened in January 2014, the Court held a hearing on 7 December 2016; the next hearing is scheduled for 20 March 2017. In the case of an attempted serious attack against UNIFIL in 2008, in which one of four sentenced perpetrators filed an appeal, the Military Court of Appeal held one hearing on 17 January and scheduled the next for 9 May. In three cases of serious attacks perpetrated in 2011 against UNIFIL peacekeepers from France and Italy, investigations are ongoing. The case of homicide in 1989, when three UNIFIL peacekeepers from Ireland were shot dead, came back to trial in 2015 upon the repatriation to Lebanon of the perpetrator, who had been sentenced in absentia. The

latest hearing at the Permanent Military Court in that case was held on 27 January, and the next one is scheduled for 17 March.

IV. Deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

66. As at 6 February 2017, UNIFIL comprised 10,564 military personnel, including 411 women, from 40 troop-contributing countries; 236 international staff, including 73 women; and 579 national civilian staff, including 144 women. The UNIFIL Maritime Task Force comprised two frigates, three corvettes, one offshore patrol vessel and one fast patrol boat, and 855 of the Force's total military personnel, including 7 women. In addition, 53 military observers, including 2 women, of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization were under the operational control of UNIFIL.

V. Conduct and discipline

67. UNIFIL and the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon continued to strengthen existing preventive measures against sexual exploitation and/or abuse. The United Nations country team on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse network and task force reviewed current measures and assessed whether changes in the risk environment would necessitate amendments. During the period under review, UNIFIL received one allegation of sexual exploitation and/or abuse that was promptly processed. No allegations of sexual exploitation and/or abuse were received by the Office of the Special Coordinator.

68. In addition to the existing internal complaints mechanisms for UNIFIL and the Office of the Special Coordinator, information on submitting complaints of any behaviour falling short of the highest standards (including sexual exploitation and/or abuse) was disseminated internally and externally in Arabic and English. The UNIFIL Civil Affairs Section regularly informs local religious and political leaders about the procedures for reporting any misconduct involving UNIFIL personnel that they may become aware of, thereby ensuring that such incidents are brought to the attention of the Force leadership in a timely manner.

VI. Observations

69. I welcome the political and institutional progress Lebanon has achieved since the election of President Aoun. I congratulate Prime Minister Hariri on his assumption of the premiership and the subsequent swift formation of a Government under his leadership. Further to the ministerial statement, the Government's commitment to working to restore the confidence of the citizens of Lebanon in the country's institutions and towards political and economic revitalization has been evident. The resumption of regular Cabinet meetings and parliamentary legislative sessions are encouraging signs that the State institutions of Lebanon are again functioning effectively.

70. The political progress to date also represents an opportunity to continue strengthening and extending the authority of Lebanon. In that regard, the fact that Hizbullah and other groups continue to maintain weapons undermines the authority of the State and stands in contradiction to the country's obligations under resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006). It may also affect the country's constructive reengagement with the region and the confidence of international

partners. The Security Council, in resolution 1701 (2006), called for the full implementation of the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords, and of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), which require the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon, so that, pursuant to the Lebanese Cabinet decision of 27 July 2006, there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than those of the Lebanese State.

71. I condemn the threat made by Hizbullah Secretary-General Nasrallah against Israel on 16 February, which cannot be justified by the stated purpose of deterrence. Rhetoric threatening the use of force by any of the parties undermines the relative calm and stability that has prevailed among them. All sides should refrain from such threats, as they exacerbate the risk of tension or miscalculation, which could lead to renewed conflict.

72. Building on the ministerial statement of 28 December 2016, it is important for Lebanon to continue to demonstrate genuine commitment and adherence to resolution 1701 (2006) and other relevant resolutions. In that context, I welcome the Prime Minister's positive reference to resolution 1701 (2006) of 17 February and the reiteration of the full commitment of Lebanon to relevant resolutions, in particular resolution 1701 (2006), conveyed in the 23 February letter from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations. It is key that Lebanon adhere to its commitment to relevant resolutions and to the requirement to disarm all armed groups in Lebanon, so that there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than that of the Lebanese State.

73. I encourage the President of Lebanon to reconvene the national dialogue to guide the formulation of a national defence strategy that would address the maintaining of arms outside the control of the State and other relevant elements of resolution 1701 (2006). It also remains important that earlier decisions of the national dialogue be implemented, specifically those relating to the disarmament of non-Lebanese groups and the dismantling of the military bases of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada.

74. Occasional serious violations and tensions along the Blue Line underline the importance of the UNIFIL liaison and coordination arrangements to de-escalate tensions, address the risk of miscalculation in a timely manner and prevent small incidents from deteriorating into violence on a larger scale. I am encouraged by the active engagement of both parties with UNIFIL to manage potentially sensitive situations, as well as the restraint the parties have shown in responding to situations and in working through UNIFIL to maintain security and stability for the communities living on either side of the Blue Line.

75. The proactive use by the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israeli Defense Forces of the established liaison mechanism to share information on planned activities and deployments with UNIFIL has proven to be of immense importance and utility. I encourage both Israel and Lebanon to continue to actively use the UNIFIL liaison channel to address issues of concern as well as alleged violations, rather than take unilateral action. The open and constructive exchanges in the tripartite forum, including on serious and long-standing violations of resolution 1701 (2006), are a testament to the commitment of the parties as well as the trust they place in UNIFIL and the liaison and coordination arrangements.

76. I call upon both parties to ensure continued respect for the Blue Line, irrespective of each party's reservations, which will have to be addressed in the context of formal border demarcation, and to prevent violations that could jeopardize calm and stability in southern Lebanon. Any deliberate violation of the Blue Line, in particular by armed forces personnel, is unacceptable. The marking of the Blue Line remains of strategic importance for the cessation of hostilities, and I encourage both parties to continue to actively engage in that process with UNIFIL.

77. I am seriously concerned regarding the almost daily violations of Lebanese airspace by the Israeli Air Force, in clear disregard of Lebanese sovereignty and the provisions of resolution 1701 (2006). I am also concerned about the continued occupation of northern Ghajar and an adjacent area by the Israeli Defense Forces. I call upon the Government of Israel to engage closely with UNIFIL to withdraw Israeli forces from northern Ghajar and to cease all violations of Lebanese airspace.

78. I remain equally concerned about the continuing presence of unauthorized weapons in the area between the Litani River and the Blue Line, in breach of resolution 1701 (2006). In addition, the firing of weapons poses a risk to the population and UNIFIL personnel. I call upon the Government of Lebanon to take all actions necessary to ensure that there are no unauthorized armed personnel, assets or weapons in the UNIFIL area of operations.

79. It is the responsibility of the Government of Lebanon, as the host Government, to ensure the safety and security of UNIFIL personnel and their freedom of movement throughout the area of operations. While I note the overall positive relationship between UNIFIL and the local population, as demonstrated by their many interactions, I urge the Lebanese authorities to continue to cooperate with UNIFIL to guarantee the adequate protection of peacekeepers, including by bringing to justice the perpetrators of acts committed against them.

80. The ongoing maritime interdiction operations by the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force form an important contribution to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), in addition to serving as a deterrent and a stabilizing factor in a highly volatile environment.

81. Continued efforts remain necessary to solidify the calm that has prevailed over the last decade and move past the current precarious status quo towards a permanent ceasefire. I invite both parties to consider, with my Special Coordinator and the UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander, mutual confidence-building measures and steps as a sign of practical commitment to resolution 1701 (2006) that can help sustain the calm and advance stability.

82. It is vital for its stability and security that Lebanon remain committed to its disassociation policy, consistent with its commitment in the Baabda Declaration. I echo the calls of the Security Council, including in its presidential statement of 22 July 2016 (S/PRST/2016/10) and its press statement of 19 December, for all Lebanese parties to recommit to the country's policy of disassociation, and reiterate my call upon Hizbullah and all Lebanese parties to cease any involvement in the Syrian conflict.

83. I condemn the movement of fighters and war materiel across the Lebanese-Syrian border in breach of resolution 1701 (2006) and the shelling and shooting into Lebanese border areas from the Syrian Arab Republic. The lack of a delineated, demarcated Lebanese-Syrian border is no justification for violations of Lebanese sovereignty by any party. I call upon all concerned to cease violations of the border and to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon.

84. In the spirit of sustaining institutional progress, I call upon the leadership of Lebanon to move forward with the conduct of parliamentary elections in accordance with the electoral calendar and the adoption of a national budget and a national defence budget. Ongoing efforts to arrive at an agreement on an electoral framework, which will enable timely parliamentary elections, should be supported. The timely conduct of parliamentary elections, in accordance with the Constitution and reflecting the country's democratic traditions, will be critical to the stability of Lebanon. I welcome the commitment by leaders, including Prime Minister Hariri

and Speaker Nabih Berri, to the introduction of a women's quota that will ensure the adequate representation of women in Parliament.

85. The continued threat of terrorism and the successful operations by the Lebanese Armed Forces to counter it are a further illustration of the crucial role of the Lebanese Armed Forces. The Lebanese Armed Forces bear sole responsibility for protecting Lebanon, defending its sovereignty and territorial integrity and advancing the Government's efforts to extend State authority in the field of security. I encourage the international community to continue its support to the capabilities of the Lebanese Armed Forces, stretched by multiple security challenges. I commend the Lebanese Armed Forces for their valiant role in protecting Lebanon and offer my condolences over the loss of life of Lebanese Armed Forces personnel in the course of duty.

86. I welcome the continued generous donor support to Lebanon in regard to addressing the needs of Syrian refuges and other vulnerable populations. While continued high levels of humanitarian funding remain essential, it will be equally important to mobilize additional, longer-term development resources either through grants or concessional loans. Lebanon needs support to achieve long-term investment, economic growth and employment opportunities which benefit refugees and host communities alike. I call upon all Member States to honour and build on their pledges to date and to reinforce their assistance to help Lebanon cope with the impact of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic.

87. I welcome the decision by the Government to ensure more structured and regular engagement with international partners through a high-level steering committee in order to agree on joint priorities and ensure the alignment of efforts.

88. Cooperation between the Lebanese authorities and Palestinian factions remains important to prevent and contain violence. I welcome the agreement, following a bout of violence, to re-establish a joint security arrangement in Ein El Helweh, which I hope will ensure security in and around the camp. Security measures should at all times be compatible with humanitarian principles and human rights standards. Funding for UNWRA remains a priority, and I reiterate my call upon donors for greater support to UNRWA in order to enable it to effectively assist Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

89. I welcome the Government's steps to advance the development of a national strategy for the prevention of violent extremism in Lebanon. I encourage national and international stakeholders to engage in that effort in close collaboration with the United Nations and international partners.

90. The political and economic stability of Lebanon is a matter of shared regional and international interest and requires continued collective attention. I welcome the unity the Security Council has consistently demonstrated to insulate Lebanon from regional crises. I welcome the continued country-level engagement of the International Support Group in Beirut and urge the Group to remain mobilized in support of the country's political and socioeconomic stability. I call upon Lebanon to sustain such partnership in the framework of key principles established with the international community, and encourage regional partners to use their influence constructively to help protect Lebanon from the spillover of regional conflicts.

91. I wish to extend my appreciation to all countries contributing troops and equipment to UNIFIL and Observer Group Lebanon. I thank my Special Coordinator, Sigrid Kaag, and the staff of her office, the UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander, Major General Michael Beary, and the civilian and military personnel of UNIFIL for their continued efforts.

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Letter dated 8 March 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to Security Council resolution 2305 (2016), in which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) until 31 August 2017 and, bearing in mind the strategic priorities and recommendations identified by my predecessor in his letter of 12 March 2012 (S/2012/151) as a result of the strategic review of UNIFIL, expressed the need for a follow-up and update, requesting that I conduct, by February 2017, a strategic review of UNIFIL, examining the structure of its uniformed and civilian components and related resources in an effort to ensure that the Mission is configured most appropriately to fulfil its mandated tasks. The scope of the strategic review did not include the mandate of the Mission or its authorized maximum strength of 15,000 troops, as specified in resolution 1701 (2006).

In accordance with resolution 2305 (2016), and following consultations with the parties, Security Council members and countries contributing troops to UNIFIL and to the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, and pursuant to desk reviews prepared by UNIFIL in close consultation with the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, a multidisciplinary team from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support visited UNIFIL from 15 to 22 January 2017. The team met with officials in Lebanon and Israel, United Nations entities, representatives of troop-contributing countries and ambassadors of the permanent members of the Security Council. The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, El-Ghassim Wane, led the review team, which included representatives from the Offices of Operations and Military Affairs, the Policy, Evaluation and Training Division and the Department of Field Support. A military capability study of UNIFIL was conducted from 18 to 26 January 2017, and was informed by the strategic review.

The strategic review took place during a period of political progress in Lebanon, with the election of President Michel Aoun, the appointment of Prime Minister Saad Hariri and the formation of the new Government, albeit within an overall context of uncertainty, not least as a result of the ongoing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Notwithstanding the calm and stability that continue to prevail across the Blue Line, there has been no tangible progress towards a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution, as called for in resolution 1701 (2006). More than 10 years after the adoption of that resolution, the main causes of the conflict remain largely unaddressed. It is the responsibility of Lebanon and Israel to fulfil their respective obligations under the resolution.

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The imperative remains for continued efforts to ensure that the area between the Blue Line and the Litani River is free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL. The Government of Lebanon must make good on its pledge to increase its involvement, and that of its ministries and security institutions, in the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), and its presence in southern Lebanon, thereby further extending the authority of the State in the south. This includes expanding the capacity and presence of the Lebanese Armed Forces in southern Lebanon and in the territorial waters of Lebanon.

Intrusions into Lebanese airspace by Israel continue unabated, in violation of Lebanese sovereignty and resolution 1701 (2006). These almost daily overflights run counter to the efforts of UNIFIL to reduce tensions and have a negative impact on the credibility of the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL. The continued occupation by the Israel Defense Forces of the northern part of the village of Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line also constitutes a continuing violation of resolution 1701 (2006). Israel must cease those violations.

During the review, both parties emphasized their continued commitment to implementing resolution 1701 (2006) and maintaining stability along the Blue Line. Both parties also agreed on the importance of UNIFIL and the need to maintain the composition and deployment of the Mission, including its Maritime Task Force, at its present strength, in its area of operations. Lebanon and Israel continue to approach any adjustment to the capabilities, structure or activities of the Mission with strong caution, emphasizing that, in the current climate of uncertainty, the focus should be on minimizing risks.

The team reviewed the progress of the strategic dialogue between the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL and the ways in which its pace could be accelerated. The strategic dialogue is a means not only to strengthen the capacity of the Lebanese Armed Forces to assume greater security responsibilities in southern Lebanon and in Lebanese territorial waters, but also to facilitate movement towards a permanent ceasefire. Since 2012, demands on the Lebanese Armed Forces have not subsided; on the contrary, they have increased. The Lebanese Armed Forces continue to face multiple security challenges, particularly along the northern and eastern borders of the country. As a result of this situation, the Lebanese Armed Forces maintain only two reduced-strength brigades in the area south of the Litani River. Consequently, the presence of the most visible aspect of Lebanese State authority in southern Lebanon has not increased as expected.

The review acknowledged that, through the strategic dialogue, in coordination with the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon and building on previous efforts of the International Support Group for Lebanon, UNIFIL supports the efforts of the Government of Lebanon to increase the capacity of the Lebanese Armed Forces to carry out the tasks mandated in resolution 1701 (2006), including by mobilizing resources for prioritized needs identified by the Lebanese Armed Forces. In that connection, the review encouraged UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces to further study and develop the possibility of establishing a "model brigade" dedicated to the sector south of the Litani River in the UNIFIL area of operations as a concrete step towards enhancing the capacity of the Lebanese Armed Forces in the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). At the same time, the review recognized the importance for the Government of Lebanon and the Lebanese Armed Forces of assuming accountability and responsibility in that regard.

The review reconfirmed the essential function of the liaison and coordination arrangements that UNIFIL has established with the parties, bilaterally and through the tripartite mechanism, in deconflicting situations and defusing tensions, as well

as enhancing cooperation and building trust. A key objective of the engagement of UNIFIL with the parties continues to be to assist the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces in finding mutually agreeable security arrangements and agreeing on confidence-building measures to reduce the potential for tension or incidents, in particular in sensitive areas along the Blue Line. This includes the continued efforts that UNIFIL is making with the parties to mark the Blue Line visibly on the ground.

The review determined that, overall, the Force was well configured to implement its mandated tasks. UNIFIL continues to be a credible, flexible and mobile force. The deterrence effect of the high density of UNIFIL troops within the area of operations, coupled with the more than 400 daily operational activities, including ground and aerial patrols, checkpoints and observation tasks, contributes to security and stability in the area. While the relationship between UNIFIL and the local population continues to be positive overall, isolated incidents, some of them serious, have at times affected the freedom of movement of UNIFIL. I have urged the Lebanese authorities to continue to cooperate with UNIFIL to guarantee adequate protection of the peacekeepers, as well as their freedom of movement throughout the area of operations.

The review noted the important role of the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force in providing training for and in supporting the naval branch of the Lebanese Armed Forces to prevent the unauthorized entry by sea of arms or related materials into Lebanon through maritime interdiction operations. By enabling a stable and safe maritime environment, the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force not only contributes to enhanced maritime trade, but also deters the use of Lebanese territorial waters for illicit purposes and mitigates the spillover effects of the regional crises across the Mediterranean.

The review assessed the impact of the different community outreach activities of UNIFIL, including those funded by some of the national contingents of UNIFIL and those funded through the assessed Mission budget in the form of quick-impact projects and strategic communication activities. Quick-impact projects are intended to strengthen links between UNIFIL and local communities and address some of the most pressing needs of the population. They also serve to harmonize the engagement of the Mission with local communities in line with the priorities of the national authorities. Through quick-impact projects, the Mission seeks to ensure the equitable geographical distribution of its community outreach activities.

In the review, it was determined that the strategic priorities identified in the strategic review of 2012 remained largely valid but needed to be adapted to take into account the evolving regional dynamics and internal context in Lebanon. It was recognized that failure to meet the political objectives of resolution 1701 (2006), namely a permanent ceasefire and long-term solution to the conflict, increasingly puts at risk the relative calm achieved in southern Lebanon and along the Blue Line. Importantly, there is a need for continued United Nations advocacy efforts and engagement with political and military interlocutors in Lebanon and Israel, through the good offices of the Special Coordinator for Lebanon and the Head of Mission and Force Commander of UNIFIL, in ensuring that the cessation of hostilities is preserved and progress is made towards a permanent ceasefire. In this regard, concerted engagement with the international community continues to be essential to foster support for increasing the capacity of the Lebanese Armed Forces and to extend the authority of the State in the south.

At the same time, the updated strategic priorities reflect a heightened emphasis on prevention, including through the presence of UNIFIL and its operational and non-operational activities, in an effort to mitigate risks in a timely manner, thereby

preventing small incidents from escalating into larger-scale violence. In this regard, the review recognized the importance of UNIFIL continuing to take steps, however incremental, to create the space to enable the parties to move from the fragile cessation of hostilities to a permanent ceasefire. I am encouraged by the continued willingness of the parties to engage with UNIFIL in taking practical and constructive measures to maintain calm and to ensure stability. Although UNIFIL has identified no imminent threat of physical violence against civilians, the review also addressed the need to ensure operational preparedness, in particular as it pertains to the Mission's civilian protection mandate.

The strategic review has identified the following three strategic priorities in the implementation of the mandate of UNIFIL:

(a) UNIFIL, in close coordination with the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon and the United Nations country team, should further promote an integrated and comprehensive approach to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) in order, among other things, to:

(i) Support the efforts of the Government of Lebanon in increasing its involvement, and that of its ministries and security institutions, in the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), and its presence in southern Lebanon, thereby further extending the authority of the State in the south;

(ii) Support the efforts of the Government of Lebanon to increase the capacity of the Lebanese Armed Forces and its presence in southern Lebanon and the territorial waters of Lebanon at an accelerated pace, particularly in relation to prioritized land and maritime capabilities, through the strategic dialogue between the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL and through the advocacy work of the International Support Group for Lebanon, as appropriate, not only as a prerequisite for the gradual assumption of effective and sustainable security control of the UNIFIL area of operations and Lebanese territorial waters, but also as a key element to supporting steps towards a permanent ceasefire;

(b) UNIFIL should undertake all necessary preventive actions to maintain calm along the Blue Line and in its area of operations, including as a means to build confidence between the parties and contribute to creating conditions conducive to moving from the cessation of hostilities to a permanent ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel;

(c) Without prejudice to the responsibilities of the parties, and in accordance with its mandate, UNIFIL should have contingency plans in place and be prepared to implement its mandate effectively and safely in extreme situations and, in particular, to deliver on its mandated responsibility to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence, within its means and capabilities.

The overall strategic political guidance is to maintain the current strength, composition and configuration of UNIFIL. This notwithstanding, the strategic review, in line with its terms of reference and in pursuit of the aforementioned strategic priorities, made a number of recommendations to ensure that UNIFIL may fulfil its mandated tasks optimally, while maintaining its operational effectiveness on land, in the air and at sea. Through the strategic review, a number of potential efficiency gains have been identified. A summary of recommendations is attached to the present letter (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

Annex to the letter dated 8 March 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Summary of recommendations

Protection of civilians

1. Bearing in mind the primary responsibility of the host State for protection, liaison arrangements for protection contingency planning should be established with the Government of Lebanon, as well as with the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon and relevant United Nations country team partners.

2. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) should build upon progress achieved in its contingency planning for the protection of civilians by extending planning to the sector and unit levels and conducting frequent rehearsals and logistics preparation, with a view to ensuring the commitment of troop-contributing countries to execute such plans and implement the mandate of UNIFIL to protect civilians, should the situation warrant it.

Strategic dialogue mechanism

3. In line with the Capability Development Plan of the Lebanese Armed Forces, the strategic dialogue plan and, as appropriate, building on previous coordination efforts of the International Support Group for Lebanon, the strategic dialogue between the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL should prioritize the needs that the Forces have put forward to build their capacity on land and at sea, namely:

(a) A "model brigade" of the Lebanese Armed Forces in the UNIFIL area of operations;

(b) Naval assets (offshore patrol vessel);

(c) A Lebanese Armed Forces regional civil-military cooperation centre in the south in the UNIFIL area of operations.

4. Through the strategic dialogue, UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces should establish a series of benchmarks and timelines, with a view to developing further the "model brigade" concept and ensuring its sustainability in terms of staffing, equipment, training, bases and resources. This would maximize the capacity of existing Lebanese Armed Forces personnel in the UNIFIL area of operations, as well as increase the presence of the Lebanese Armed Forces south of the Litani River. The brigade would facilitate closer joint operations, as UNIFIL would provide "advise and assist" teams at various echelons to mentor leaders in the Lebanese Armed Forces.

5. Through their strategic dialogue, the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL should establish a series of benchmarks and timelines, with a view to establishing a dedicated cadre of trained and experienced naval personnel who, through continuous training, would be able to assume the role of trainers.

6. UNIFIL, in consultation with the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, should consider how best to mobilize support for developing the land and sea capabilities identified as priorities by the Lebanese Armed Forces, including the possibility of organizing a donors' conference in follow-up to the Ministerial Conference on International Support for the Lebanese Armed Forces, held in Rome in June 2014, as well as establish a system to track progress in capacity-building in relation to tasks mandated in resolution 1701

(2006) and ensure the accountability and responsibility of the Government of Lebanon and the Lebanese Armed Forces in that regard.

7. In an effort to promote, facilitate and accelerate the pace of resource mobilization for the prioritized needs identified by the Lebanese Armed Forces and in order to avoid duplication of effort, UNIFIL should continue to cooperate with the Executive Military Commission, which is co-chaired by the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, on the coordination of multi-donor assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces.

8. The UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander should retain overall political direction and oversight of the strategic dialogue process, which is currently coordinated by the Deputy Force Commander. In an effort to bolster and broaden access by the Force to the international diplomatic and donor community, including troop-contributing countries, in close coordination with the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon and in line with the strategic priority to ensure an integrated approach to support capacity-building in the Lebanese Armed Forces, it is recommended that UNIFIL, under the overall guidance of the Head of Mission and Force Commander, enhance the engagement of the Deputy Head of Mission and its civilian substantive component in the strategic dialogue.

Liaison and coordination with the parties

9. All assets should be synchronized and synergy between the UNIFIL Liaison Branch, sector forces and the Observer Group Lebanon of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization should be ensured, with a view to fully utilizing all capabilities, especially as first responders to incidents.

10. The UNIFIL Liaison Branch should be strengthened, within existing resources, including for deployment south of the Blue Line.

11. In order to enhance the current level of liaison and allow for a strategic dialogue with the Israel Defense Forces and other Israeli authorities on issues relating to the UNIFIL mandate, the establishment of an office in Tel Aviv, agreed by the Government of Israel in February 2007, remains of critical importance for UNIFIL.

Structure of the uniformed and civilian components of UNIFIL

Land forces

12. Ways to enhance further the coverage and effectiveness of coordinated operations between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces should be explored.

13. Notwithstanding the overall strategic political guidance to maintain the current strength, composition and configuration of UNIFIL land forces, a troop-to-task analysis conducted as part of the military capability study of UNIFIL identified a number of recommendations to ensure that UNIFIL may fulfil its mandated tasks optimally.

14. Priority should be given to the work of the Contingent-Owned Equipment/Memorandum of Understanding Management Review Board in order to realize efficiencies.

Maritime Task Force

15. The overall strategic political guidance is to maintain the operational effectiveness of the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force. Following this guidance, a ship-to-task analysis conducted as part of the military capability study of UNIFIL

identified a number of recommendations to ensure greater efficiency in the way the Maritime Task Force fulfils its mandated tasks:

(a) The UNIFIL Maritime Task Force should be gradually reconfigured to comprise an all corvette fleet. The adjustment would entail phasing out one offshore patrol vessel/fast patrol boat and replacing another such vessel with a corvette, thus resulting in a stronger reconfigured fleet of six corvettes. The envisioned reconfiguration could take place by the end of 2018, with the expectation that partners would be able to help the naval branch of the Lebanese Armed Forces to improve its capacity, including through the acquisition of an offshore patrol vessel that would be pursued via the strategic dialogue mechanism and the International Support Group for Lebanon, as appropriate;

(b) The flight hours of the two UNIFIL Maritime Task Force helicopters should be reduced from 45 hours to 25 hours per month, commensurate with their actual use;

(c) The total maximum number of maritime crew personnel across the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force, including the Maritime Task Force headquarters, should be reduced from 1,200 to 900.

16. Ways to enhance the effectiveness of coordinated operations between UNIFIL and the naval branch of the Lebanese Armed Forces should be explored, including by increasing the continuous presence of the naval forces at sea to 72 hours per week and strengthening the reliability of the Coastal Radar Organization stations in conducting maritime interdiction operations.

Community outreach activities

17. In support of the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and the Mission's strategic priorities, UNIFIL community outreach activities should be directed at: promoting good relations between the Mission and local communities and ensuring the protection and freedom of action of the Mission; the full deployment and effective control of the Lebanese Armed Forces in southern Lebanon; and supporting the efforts of the Government of Lebanon to increase its involvement in the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and its presence in southern Lebanon, thereby further extending the authority of the State in the south.

18. To ensure that community outreach is planned and implemented as a Mission-wide activity, UNIFIL engagement should be structured along two interrelated lines of action under the day-to-day management of the Deputy Head of Mission: outreach and programmatic activities (cost and no-cost); and strategic communications.

19. To strengthen the coherence and effectiveness of its community outreach and programmatic efforts, it is recommended that UNIFIL establish a community outreach board that would be led by the Deputy Head of Mission and comprise: the military Chief of Staff, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and the civil affairs, J9, civil-military cooperation and sector commanders, to ensure that:

(a) Annual priorities and criteria of the Mission are established to direct all community outreach and programmatic activities (cost and no-cost) to meet the objectives listed above;

(b) Community outreach and programmatic activities of the Mission are culturally sensitive and distributed equitably across the area of operations;

(c) Programmatic activities are undertaken in close consultation with municipal or central institutions of the Government of Lebanon and, where feasible and appropriate, under their visible leadership;

(d) Opportunities are identified to coordinate or engage, where relevant and appropriate, the Lebanese Armed Forces in the delivery of programmatic activities;

(e) Programmatic activities are coordinated with the country team and other stakeholders to avoid duplication and, where possible, ensure synergy;

(f) The impact of UNIFIL community outreach efforts is assessed regularly, including through the establishment of a common Mission database, systematic joint evaluations of all community outreach activities and the conduct of public opinion surveys.

20. To strengthen the contribution of community outreach activities to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), and specifically the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces throughout the south, UNIFIL, where relevant and appropriate, should engage the Lebanese Armed Forces in the implementation of the Mission's programmatic activities. Should the Government of Lebanon establish a regional civil-military cooperation centre in the south, it should be the focal point for the planning and organization of coordinated or joint community outreach activities.

21. UNIFIL should continue to maintain an annual budget for quick-impact projects of $500,000 for the next two to three years. Those projects should ensure balance in the geographical distribution of activities and be in conformity with the national priorities and plans of the Government of Lebanon. Priority should be given to coordinated or joint civil-military cooperation activities with the Lebanese Armed Forces. Consideration should be given to quick-impact projects co-funded with municipal or central authorities.

22. To strengthen the impact of community outreach activities, the UNIFIL Civil Affairs Section should prioritize: liaison and engagement with key Government of Lebanon ministries and security institutions, in coordination with the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon and the country team; and the monitoring and assessment of and reporting on community outreach activities of the Mission, in addition to ongoing engagement with local communities in the south.

23. In support of enhanced assessment of the impact of community outreach activities, public opinion surveys managed by the Civil Affairs Section could be streamlined to enable more agile and regular surveys, the analysis of which could contribute to the planning and delivery of community outreach activities.

24. To strengthen coordination of civil-military cooperation activities, the Force Commander's Civil-Military Cooperation Unit should be tasked by the J9 branch and report to the military Chief of Staff through the Chief of J9, with responsibility for supporting the planning, implementation, delivery and evaluation of programmatic activities at the sector level.

25. To strengthen the coherence and delivery of UNIFIL strategic communications, the Military Community Outreach Unit should be reduced from 55 to 25 personnel and merged with the Public Information Office to establish a Mission Strategic Communications Unit, to be staffed by personnel from at least three troop-contributing countries and headed by a P-5 staff member (the current Chief of the Public Information Office), who would report to the Deputy Head of Mission.

26. Further to the implementation in full, over a three-year period, of the recommendations of the 2013 civilian staffing review, UNIFIL should continue to optimize its staffing complement and resources to support the effective and cost-efficient implementation of its mandate and, in this regard, make relevant proposals for the 2018/19 and 2019/20 budgets.

Mission integration and coordination

27. Establish a civilian Chief of Staff in the Office of the Head of Mission and Force Commander, within existing resources, at the D-1 level to strengthen the integration and coordination of the Mission.

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Security Council
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Letter dated 8 March 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith an answer given by a spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 8 March 2017 with regard to the fact that the U.S. and its vassal forces are moving to take issue with the ballistic rocket launch drill staged by the Korean People's Army (see annex).

I should be grateful if you could have the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **Ja** Song Nam
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

17-03915 (E) 160317

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Annex to the letter dated 8 March 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Answer by a spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 8 March 2017 given to a question raised by the Korean Central News Agency as regards the fact that the U.S. and its vassal forces are moving to take issue with the ballistic rocket launch drill staged by the Korean People's Army

The ballistic rocket launch drill conducted by the Hwasong artillery units of the Strategic Force of the Korean People's Army (KPA) this time is a routine one to resolutely frustrate the ever-more undisguised nuclear war racket of the U.S. and other hostile forces and honourably defend the security of the country and nation.

The U.S. and south Korean puppet forces kicked off joint military manoeuvres aimed at a pre-emptive nuclear strike against DPRK, only to push the situation to the brink of a nuclear war.

It is a just the self-defensive right of a sovereign State to keep a high alert, as required by the grim situation in which an actual war may break out at any time, and to consolidate a powerful deterrence in every way to mercilessly wipe out the aggressors.

Nevertheless, the U.S. and other hostile forces are openly conducting the drills for a real war aimed at a pre-emptive nuclear strike against DPRK by mobilizing lots of strategic assets and armed forces.

They let the Security Council release a press statement, labelling KPA's routine drill as "threat". It is a brigandish act, like a thief crying, "Stop, thief!"

DPRK categorically rejects the press statement of the Security Council, as it wantonly violates a sovereign State's right to self-defence.

It is the unanimous view of the fair-minded international community that the largest-ever nuclear war drills launched by the U.S., in league with the south Korean puppet forces, are the root cause of pushing DPRK to take the toughest action.

DPRK has already clarified several times that the joint military drills are potentially dangerous, as they will wreck peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and screw up regional tensions. So, it filed a complaint with the Security Council against the war games this time, too.

How to deal with the complaint and the ill-intended manoeuvres of the U.S. and its vassal forces will be a marked occasion for the Security Council to show the international community whether it regards its mission to preserve global peace and security as fulfilling its responsibility or not.

As already clarified, KPA will reduce the bases of aggression and provocation to ashes with its invincible Hwasong rockets tipped with nuclear warheads and reliably defend the security of the country and its people's happiness in case the

U.S. and the south Korean puppet forces fire even a single bullet at the territory of DPRK.

DPRK will certainly preserve its peace and security with its own efforts and positively contribute to protecting global peace and security.

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Letter dated 9 March 2017 from the President of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to my responsibilities as President of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, in accordance with rules 8 (A) and 131 of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence of the Residual Mechanism, I am officially notifying you of the failure of the Republic of Turkey to comply with its obligations, under article 28 of the statute of the Mechanism, to cooperate with the Mechanism and to comply without undue delay with a judicial order issued by the Mechanism.

By my letter of 5 October 2016 to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/841), the attention of the members of the Council was drawn to the arrest of Judge Aydin Sefa Akay by the Government of Turkey, on or about 21 September 2016, notwithstanding his ongoing assignment as a member of the appeals bench of the Mechanism in case No. MICT-12-29-R, *The Prosecutor v. Augustin Ngirabatware*.

On 10 November 2016, Mr. Ngirabatware, through counsel, requested an order to the Government of Turkey, pursuant to article 28 of the statute and rule 55 of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence, to cease its prosecution of Judge Akay so that he could resume his judicial functions in the *Ngirabatware* case, alleging undue delay in the proceedings caused by Judge Akay's arrest and detention. The Government of Turkey did not respond to the motion. On 28 November 2016, as the Pre-Review Judge in the *Ngirabatware* case, I invited the Government of Turkey to file written submissions in response to Mr. Ngirabatware's motion. The Government of Turkey did not respond to the invitation. On 21 December 2016, as Pre-Review Judge, I ordered that a public hearing be held to provide the Government of Turkey with an additional opportunity to be heard. No representative of the Government of Turkey attended the hearing on 17 January 2017.

On 31 January 2017, as Pre-Review Judge, pursuant to articles 28 and 29 (2) of the statute and rules 55 and 131 of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence, I ordered the Government of Turkey: (a) to cease all legal proceedings against Judge Akay; and (b) to take all measures necessary to ensure Judge Akay's release from detention no later than 14 February 2017, so that he could resume his judicial functions in the *Ngirabatware* case (order of 31 January 2017).

On 6 March 2017, as Pre-Review Judge, I issued a decision on non-compliance by Turkey, finding that, in the circumstances, the Government of

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Turkey had failed to comply with its obligations under article 28 of the statute in relation to the proceedings in the *Ngirabatware* case and to comply without undue delay with a judicial order issued by the Mechanism.

In accordance with rule 8 (A) of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence, I am required, as President of the Mechanism, to notify the Security Council of a matter of non-compliance with an obligation under article 28 of the statute following a competent judicial determination by the Mechanism to that effect. By the present letter, I accordingly hereby notify the Security Council of the failure of the Government of Turkey to take action to comply with the order of 31 January 2017 and release Judge Akay, which constitutes a serious breach of its international obligations.

I deeply regret, as President of the Mechanism, that, over five months having now passed since Judge Akay's initial arrest and detention, he continues to remain in detention, notwithstanding the assertion of diplomatic immunity on behalf of the United Nations and the Mechanism's issuance of a legally binding judicial order for his release. I fully anticipate that, with the support of the members of the Security Council, the matter can be promptly resolved according to law, consistent with the statute and the obligations incumbent upon all Member States under Security Council resolution 1966 (2010), so as to enable the Mechanism to fairly, independently and expeditiously discharge the essential mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council.

I should be grateful if you would bring this notification to the attention of the members of the Security Council and have it circulated as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Judge Theodor **Meron**
President
International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals